

I'd Like To Tell Time What To Do



Robert Glück: Ceramics and Writings

Catalog

## I'd Like To Tell Time What To Do

Robert Glück: Ceramics and Writings

**Treize, Paris**

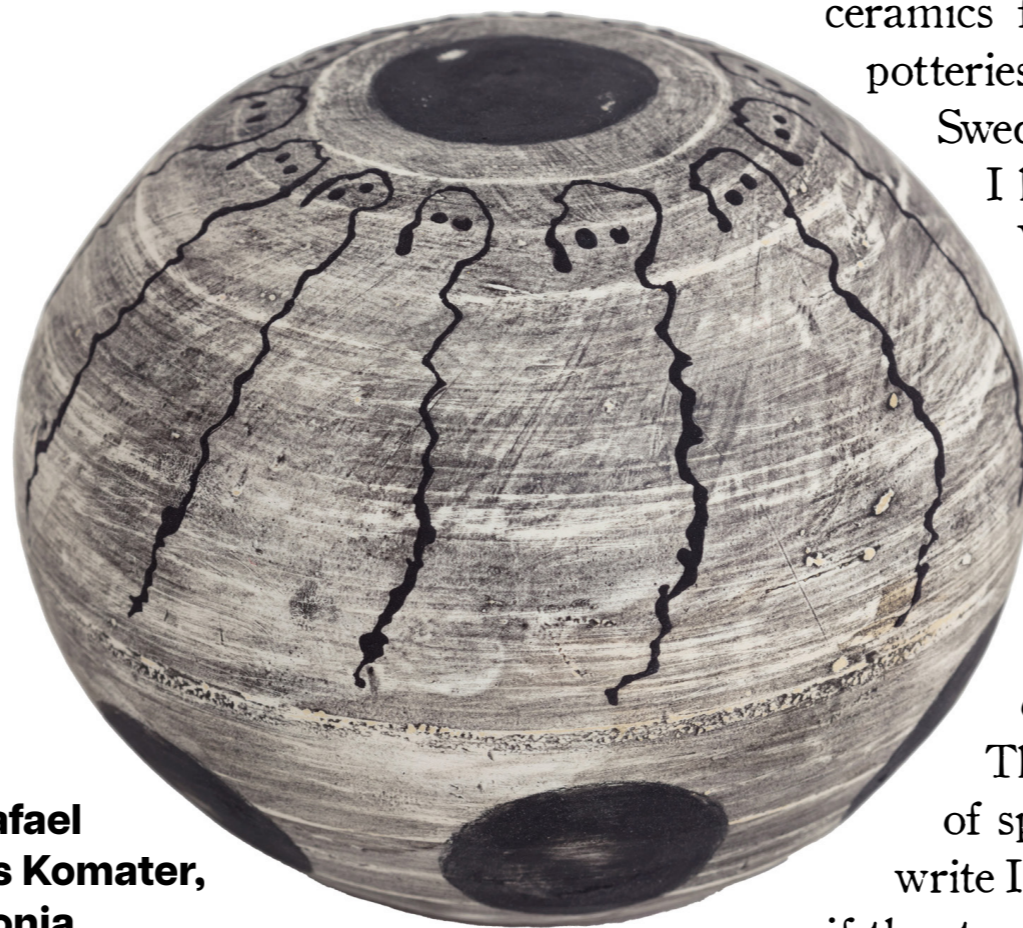
**January 6 - 28, 2024**

**Organized by Ethan Assouline, Julien Laugier  
and Joachim Hamou**

**with the help and support of**

**Josey (Norwich), Xavi Permanyer, Lou Ferrand,  
Emmanuel Guy, James Horton, Léna Monnier, Rafael  
Moreno, Miglė Dulskytė, Savannah Whaley, Chris Komater,  
Théo Robine-Langlois, Benjamin Thorel and Antonia  
Carrara**

**Photographs of the exhibition by Raphaël Massart**



When Ethan Assouline, Julien Laugier and Joachim Hamou wanted to fashion a show about writing and ceramics, I asked myself, What does my writing have to do with my ceramics? Of course the answer is, Everything: scholarship and research, engagement with the past, the desire to animate, the desire to create risk, to tell stories, to bring my friends into it, to haunt.

I began studying ceramics at the College of Art in Edinburgh in 1966 and continued at UCLA, Berkeley, and San Francisco State University, and then at Ruby's, a private studio in San Francisco. When I lived in Edinburgh, I travelled around England and northern Europe, looking at late medieval art and ceramics, my first steps on a path that led to my novel, Margery Kempe, about a woman who lived in East Anglia in the 15th Century. I stopped working with clay around 1975 – earning a living and writing left no time. Instead, I collected ceramics from two obscure early 20th century Bay Area potteries, California Faience and Jalan. In 2015, I moved to Sweden with my husband and took up ceramics again.

I love the Scandinavian potters – especially Gertrud Vasegaard, the Agnes Martin of clay. When we returned to San Francisco in 2017, I joined Ruby's again.

Ceramics begins with the mystery of spinning mud. Spinning electron, spinning earth, spinning universe. My pots display the spin that brought them into existence. Somewhere Joseph Conrad observed that he thought of Nostromo as spherical.

That was good news. My novels end with an image of spinning, and I also see them as spherical. When I write I feel as though I'm attaching scraps to a sphere, and if the story moves forward, it's an effect of putting one thing next to another.

Making a bowl, a hollow form, is the creation or the acknowledgement of emptiness. Most of the objects in this show assert this emptiness – they are closed forms without access to the inside: rattles, genie bottles, and lingams. I want emptiness in writing as well, I want emptiness to travel along with the story as a kind of potential. I tell myself that clay takes me in directions I don't allow myself in writing, more sacred (for lack of a better word), but they may not be so different. I've fashioned quite a few urns and containers for people's ashes – is there a better thing to do?

I often make a chaotic ground with an orderly pattern on top. I confect this ground in a rather complicated process, with brush, underglaze, sponge, and sandpaper. It's like the poetry of my first hero, John Keats, an enameled surface over a welter of feeling. I am moved by the smooth surface and the chaos of feeling below. This may not be an exact description of each work, but more a feeling I have about words and clay.

If writing can be empty, clay can be full of story. Shapes and patterns travel through history. Slowly covering a simple form with a geometric pattern connects me to history's good side, as does, say, pouring tea. Think of Acoma ollas, think of fields of iznik tile, infinitely repeating, a culture goofing on eternity. Or the simple geometry that Vasegaard patiently applied to her forms. I see this as a noble activity, like choosing one word over another, but why is that? Its beauty partly derives from imperfection. Vasegaard struggles toward perfection and her mistakes are there for us to consider. The closer to perfection, the more evident the imperfections. We enjoy them as we do the spontaneities of a Japanese cup. The sheer aptness of her decoration unites with the form with a feeling of justice, and that somehow gives us a kind of consolation, that meaning exists in the world.

Sometimes my writing and my pots share a dark humor. Dark humor, obsessive subject matter and practice. Faces on the 'Make-It-Stop' rattles contort with exasperation and terror, but it's no use covering the ears because the noise comes from inside. Usually, they are faces of friends, or self-portraits. The 'Ghosts-and-Universes' rattles are droll memento moris, the rows of squiggle-ghosts barely exist. Nonsense is the language of the dead. If I were a shaman this would be my rattle.

Of course, I think about death. I'm seventy-six. I could live fifteen years, or I could die tomorrow. Neither would transgress the statistics. The thought of my death enralls me! And seems narcissistic to dwell on? But that is modern thinking – in the past, I would be encouraged to think about nothing else, with idea that I would become more spiritual. But the odd thing is, I am becoming more spiritual, in my fashion.

Lingams are phallic shapes that are worshiped. They are emblems of creativity at every level, including its destructive power. If you go back far enough, you find such votaries in most cultures – like the veiled phallus in the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii, or the gold phalli of the Philistines. Even the Israelites put up phallic stones, and they carried – according to admittedly sketchy scholarship – a stone phallus in the Arc of the Covenant. Google it! Lingams certainly don't mean the same thing in their cultures – they are habitations of deity, good luck amulets, fertility gods, markers indicating formlessness, signifiers that anchor the chain of signification. But this just begins the discussion, because the tension between masculine-feminine pervades all situations in my queer community, including collapsing these binaries of course. When I drape a phallus in a fascinator, a veil worn by women at rituals like weddings and funerals, I enter this conversation.

**Robert Glück**

(ENOUGH TO CAUSE COLLAPSE)

Casablanca

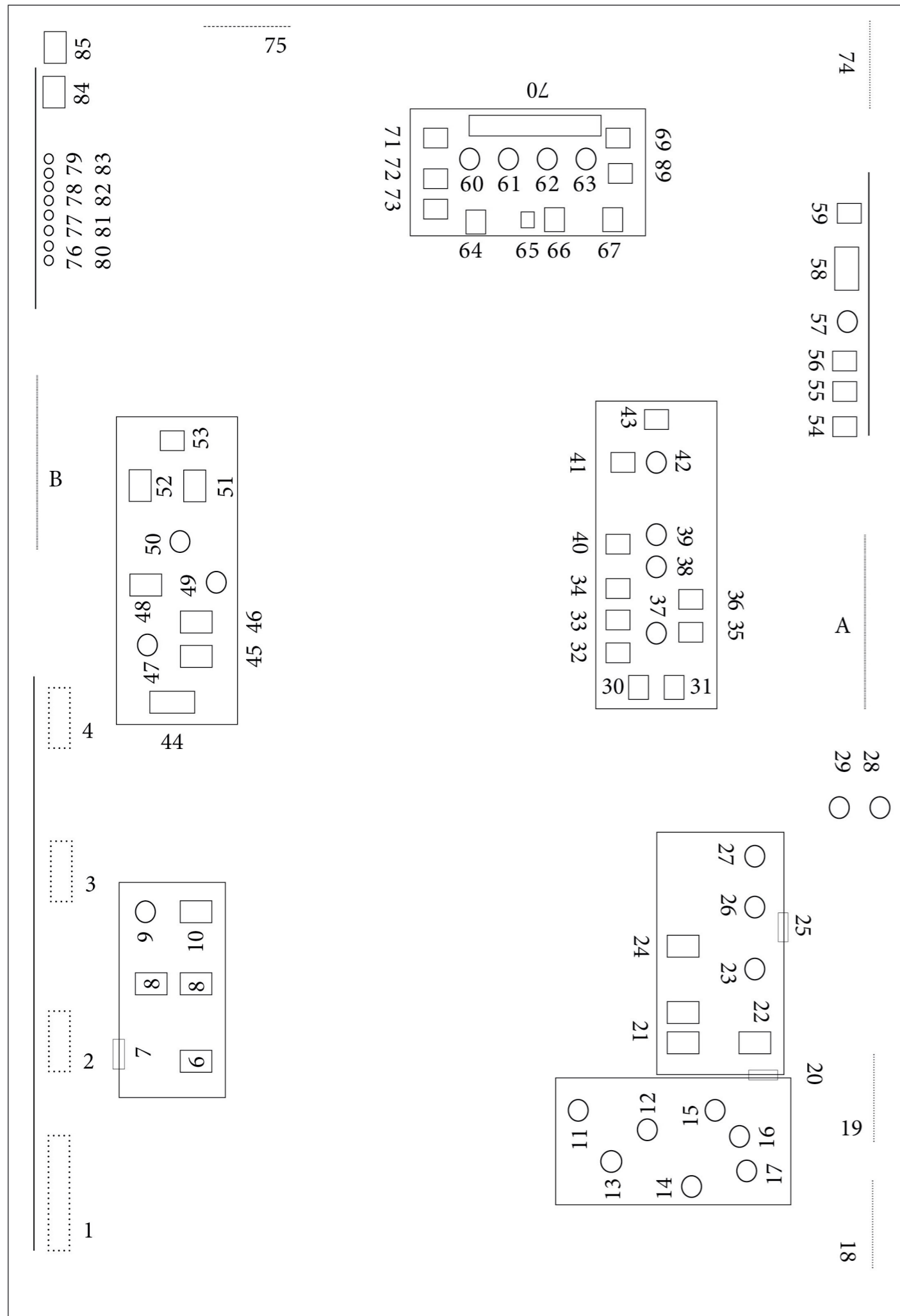
Casablanca

ENOLA GAY  
E.A.G.  
INTERSECTION  
WORKSHOP  
PRISON POLITICS



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ENOLA GAY  
FIGHT AFFINITY GROUP

TEN REASONS TO GO TO WORK TODAY  
BULLSHIT?  
Enola Gay's NEW and IMPROVED  
TEN EXCUSES NOT TO GO TO WORK



PARQUITE SALON PRESENTS  
A Reading Of  
**EROTIC  
POETRY**  
JEANNE SIROTKIN • TOM CUSON  
JOB GLUCK • ANNE VALLEY FOX  
FR. JULY 26<sup>TH</sup>  
7:30 PM  
INTERNET MUSEUM  
OF EROTIC ART  
540 POWELL  
\$3.00



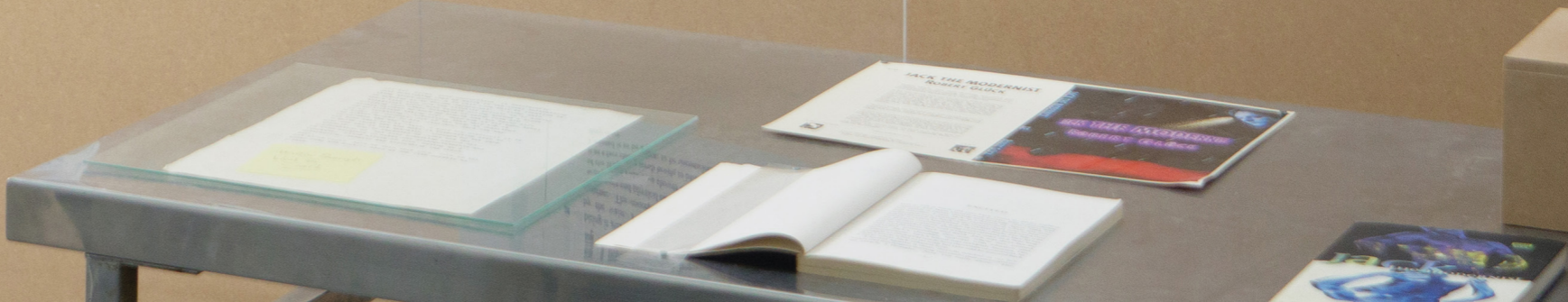
Reading at the International Museum of Erotic Art with three  
poets: Jeanne Sirotkin, Anne Valley Fox, Job  
Gluck. Photo: Mike Schaefer, 1974.  
We had a night out of our erotic dreams.



The world, refined, gathers there, gossamer  
ing caudex fertility of metaphor which supports rather  
than challenges the inevitability of Jack. I grab his  
cock, suppressing, and he says to me: Bewildered  
man. What's that? As it happens I answer for him.  
It's my appendicitis, my backache, my shag, my  
backpack, my veins de quibus, my World Trade  
Center, my banana, my auxiliary tape, my late evening  
quarrel, my garden god, my mistress, my orgasm  
spoon, my dashboard, my horizon, my Gimmick, my  
my last day, my loach, my catfish, my one-way  
sidewalk after a storm, my candle, my life, my  
universe, my drawbridge, my white whale, my tower  
fuck, my driving out, my spine, my sock, my mouth,  
my hair, my espresso, my vertigo, my cyclone, my  
podium, my Picasso, my torpedo, my tickle, my  
midway camp, my interminable suspicion, my head  
ranger, my church temple, my bread stick, my olive  
stick, my stick, my back, my shark, my rock gourd  
cheat, my intention, my spoon, my obelisk, my  
battering ram, my Boca-Raton, my cigarette, my  
wound, my fabulous child, my National Guard, my  
Rodin's Babes, my slice of gold, my most beau-  
tiful, my submarine, my source stick, my fish.

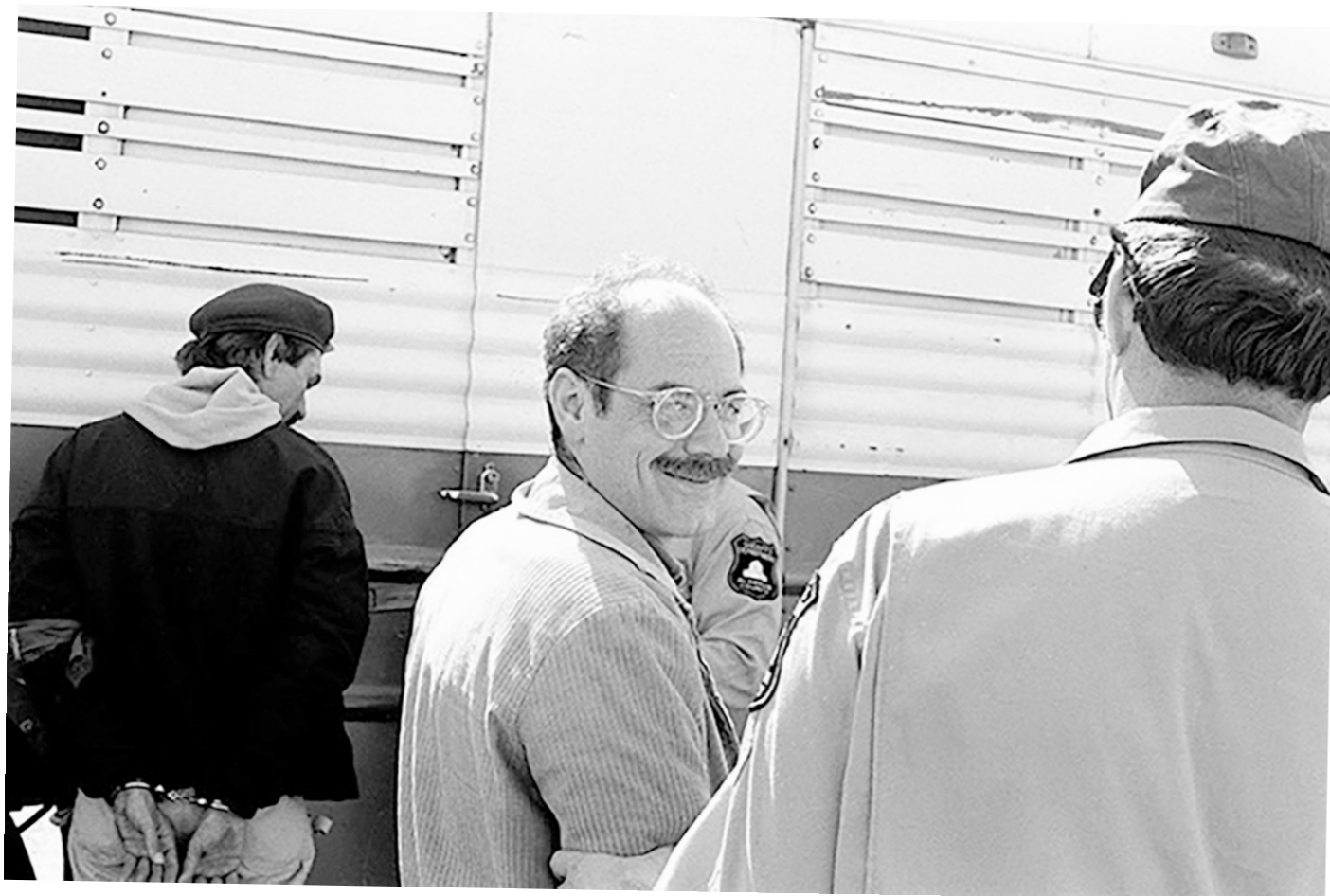
my one, my rubber, my pencil, my flag pole, my bean  
stalk, my graduate, my square Grove, my Mother  
who, my Barack, my electric, my boy, my mother, my  
the couple, my gene, my compass, my matrix, my  
nerve pain, my last poem, my Jack Travençolo.

I stopped a moment and looked at it—as  
elegant complexity transfer of itself, erect and shiny.  
It equaled the intensity I was able to feel. I don't have  
thought: No wonder Jack, familiar out of bed, seemed  
prominent that made me so urgent? Sucking, mak-  
ing—a hopefully metaphorical language: I felt like  
being it and shaking it by the shoulder and biting it  
by the neck. I wanted to be its succubus and  
master. The concept of pleasure didn't touch the  
of the flagpole Travençolo's sheet of blue specks to use  
it as a face cloth, a washcloth, to wash it like money.  
I wanted it to be a place: to be unconscious there, to  
sleep there.



## 1. Enola Gay

\* Photograph by Jack Davis - 1983



R.G: I'm in the process of getting arrested outside the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 1983. I belonged to a gay men's affinity group called Enola Gay. On June 20, 1983, we were arrested at an antinuclear blockade, and we went to jail for nearly two weeks. We were often arrested, protesting the development of nuclear weapons, apartheid in South Africa, intervention in Central America and other items on our agenda.

The photo is by Jack Davis.

\* FAG (Faggot Affinity Group)

# ENOLA GAY

was founded in July 1982 and has been meeting regularly since then. Our goal is to provide a way for gay men to express anti-nuclear politics. We have been involved in a number of different kinds of activities:

- \* Bringing a gay presence to the blockades at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, Port Chicago, the University of California, and Vandenberg Air Force Base.
- \* Co-sponsoring the benefit showing of Adair Films' "Change of Heart."
- \* Discussion of anti-nuclear strategies on the radio program "Gay Life" and in the newspaper "Coming Up."
- \* Leafletting and tabling.
- \* Networking with other affinity groups.
- \* Participation in non-violence training and consensus workshops.

# FAGGOT AFFINITY GROUP

Jack: 415-282-2843  
John: 415-864-4353



1118 Valencia  
San Francisco  
CA 94110



# TEN REASONS TO GO TO WORK TODAY

- 1) Your work is of positive social value.
- 2) Your work is creative and stimulating.
- 3) Your boss is a noble humanitarian.
- 4) You decide what you produce.
- 5) At your job, decisions are made by those who have to live with them.
- 6) You are well paid.
- 7) You can express yourself freely at work, without any repercussions.
- 8) You have the time to do the job right.
- 9) You would do your job even if you didn't need the money.
- 10) You enjoy kissing ass.

## BULLSHIT?

# Enola Gay's NEW and IMPROVED TEN EXCUSES NOT TO GO TO WORK

- 1) Your dog is sick.
- 2) You have no clean clothes.
- 3) You forgot it's Monday.
- 4) You have diarrhea.
- 5) Your fingers have typist's cramps, your back is sore from your lousy chair, your eyes are bloodshot and can't focus from all that VDT work last week.
- 6) The thought of seeing your boss's mean, ugly face makes you nauseous.
- 7) You fell asleep on BART. You're in FREMONT. You're not sure how to get back.
- 8) You protest your firm's:
  - supplying capital and technology to South Africa
  - campaign contributions to reactionary politicians
  - senseless and dictatorial personnel policies
  - tacky lobby furniture
- 9) You need more free time and starting today you demand a four day, thirty hour work week with no cut in pay (more effective if done in unison with co-workers).
- 10) Pick your Lingo:
  - A) Monday is like, you know, too much to deal with.
  - B) Monday is just terribly difficult, much too much of a jolt.
  - C) Addressing the issue of Monday, you find that it adversely impacts your time/productivity/sanity schedule, so you will seriously consider postponing this critical path item indefinitely, if not forever.
  - D) Lunes es MIERDA.

SO GET READY for the DRESS-FOR-SUCK-CESS-HONEY FASC-ION ZHOU  
NOON at MONTGOMERY and MARKET

## \* Dress-for-Suck-cess-Honey Fasc-ion Zhou - 1982

Itchy wool suits, absurd bunny bows, crippling shoes, choking neckties, drab colors, rigidified gender roles... Is the way you dress for work really a matter of choice? Bonzo Babylon tries to suppress self-expression by controlling self-presentation. Difference, creativity, spontaneity, rebelliousness are smothered under layers of gray pin-striped gabardine. Like, if you're so afraid to die you hair green if you want to, how free do you really feel to say your pissed off about nuclear terror, about the U.S. government using public resources to bully Nicaragua while doing diddely-squat about AIDS, about doing boring and useless work all day under the snoopervision of some jerky boss....

Well dears, stand up for your goddess-given right to henna during your 15 seconds of fame as Miss Financial District in Enola Gay's

**Dress-for-Suck-cess-Honey  
Fasc-ion Zhou**

APRIL 29 - Stop the City

Don't go INTO work.

Old design substantiated product strategy... predominantly blue based pattern in free-form shape.

Softweve

New design subtly suggests femininity and evokes notions of a background for strong brand identity.

Stop the City

April 29 - No Business as Usual!

12 - Montgomery Market

(Call in sick, say your dog died, forget it's Monday)

Ideas for drag themes:

- What would you wear if you knew the bomb was going off in half an hour
- Exhibit the truly disgusting ugliness of your most hated supervisor
- Out-Feinstein Feinstein. Out-Reagan Reagan.
- The outfit you would most like to make an entrance in at work.

Or make up your own theme, if you can still think creatively after watching all that television.

R.G: Once we staged a fashion show called *Dress for Suck-cess* outside the fancy department store Neiman Marcus. Our commentator linked our ensembles to international conflicts. He concluded with Nicaragua as two beautifully dressed women stepped outside. "We're from Nicaragua!" "You don't want us to invade your country, do you?" "No, no." The crowd cheered. Later I realized they thought he meant, "You don't want ten men in dresses to invade your country."



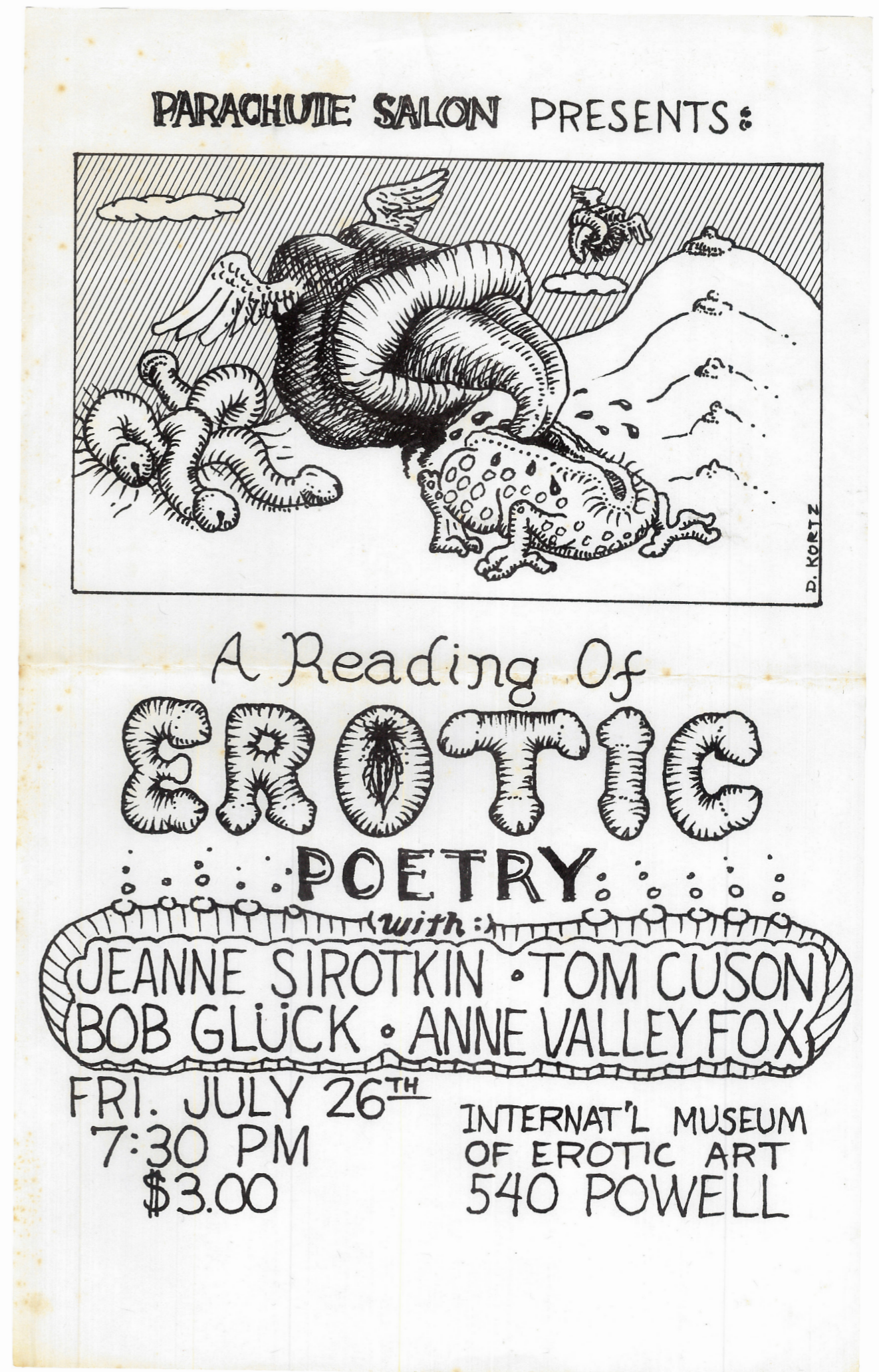
## 2. International Museum of Erotic Art

A reading of erotic poetry - 1974

\* Photograph and poster



R.G: Reading at the International Museum of Erotic Art with (from left) Tom Cuson, Steven Schutzman, Anne Valley Fox, Bob, Jeanne Sirotkin, Wendy Miller, Mark Seidenberg, 1974. We made a script out of our erotic dreams.



### 3. Small Press Traffic

\* Workshop flyer - 1977

*Small Press Traffic*

ROBERT GLÜCK'S  
WORKSHOP

PROSE · POETRY

MON 8-9:30PM

FOR INFORMATION CALL 285-8394

3841-B 24TH ST SAN FRANCISCO  
(BETWEEN CHURCH & SANCHEZ)

TUITION FREE

R.G. I started volunteering at Small Press Traffic in 1976 to locate myself in the writing world of San Francisco. The organization emerged from the new technology of offset printing and the explosion of government-funded presses and little magazines. The California Arts Council and the NEA gave us money to run free workshops, which helped to pay the rent and our salaries. I don't think I was ever happier in my employment.

As a teacher, I wanted to be a conduit, not a model, not even to give advice, but to articulate what was happening in a piece of writing. That is, to report on the experience of reading and to identify problems, not to solve them. Recognition is the first and the hardest thing.

It was the era of writing workshops, maybe the heroic period. Now people question their value. That's always a good idea, but these groups at Small Press Traffic were in love with themselves, and they formed a large part of people's social lives. That's how you know a workshop is succeeding. The relationships extend outside—people socialize, form reading groups, sleep together. I was attracting folks who would become our New Narrative group, like Kevin Killian and Dodie Bellamy, and of course they brought their friends. I was open to any kind of work. Want to write a sonnet? Fine. Science fiction novel? Fine. I insisted that everyone learn to read everything—fiction, poetry, nonfiction.

It was through the workshops that I met Kevin and Dodie, Mike Amnasan, Sam D'Allesandro, Camille Roy. And then there was a second generation—Jocelyn Saidenberg, Rob Halpern, Robin Tremblay-McGaw, and others. New Narrative was founded on the simple premise of sharing writing every week. My teaching was loose and affectionate.

In the end, I ran three workshops—one for prose/poetry, one for queer writers, and one for older writers. The older writers went on retreats to seaside locations. One of the students, Maria, was in a wheelchair, and to get her to the beach, I carried her up, up, up a flight of wooden steps and down, down, down the other side. She wept when we reached the shore because it had been so long since she'd seen the ocean. When another student, Mary-Madeleine, got cancer, we moved her into the store's living space and took care of her until she died.

You know, I'm a little clueless. Is it apparent? I taught these classes, and I became good friends with some of my students, but I rarely found out till much later who was sleeping with who, or who inspired terrible fury.

\* A Benefit Reading for Small Press Traffic

# **INTERSECTION PRESENTS**

**A BENEFIT READING FOR  
SMALL PRESS TRAFFIC:**

**BRUCE BOONE**

**TOM MANDEL**

**MARY OPPEN**

**MICHAEL PALMER**

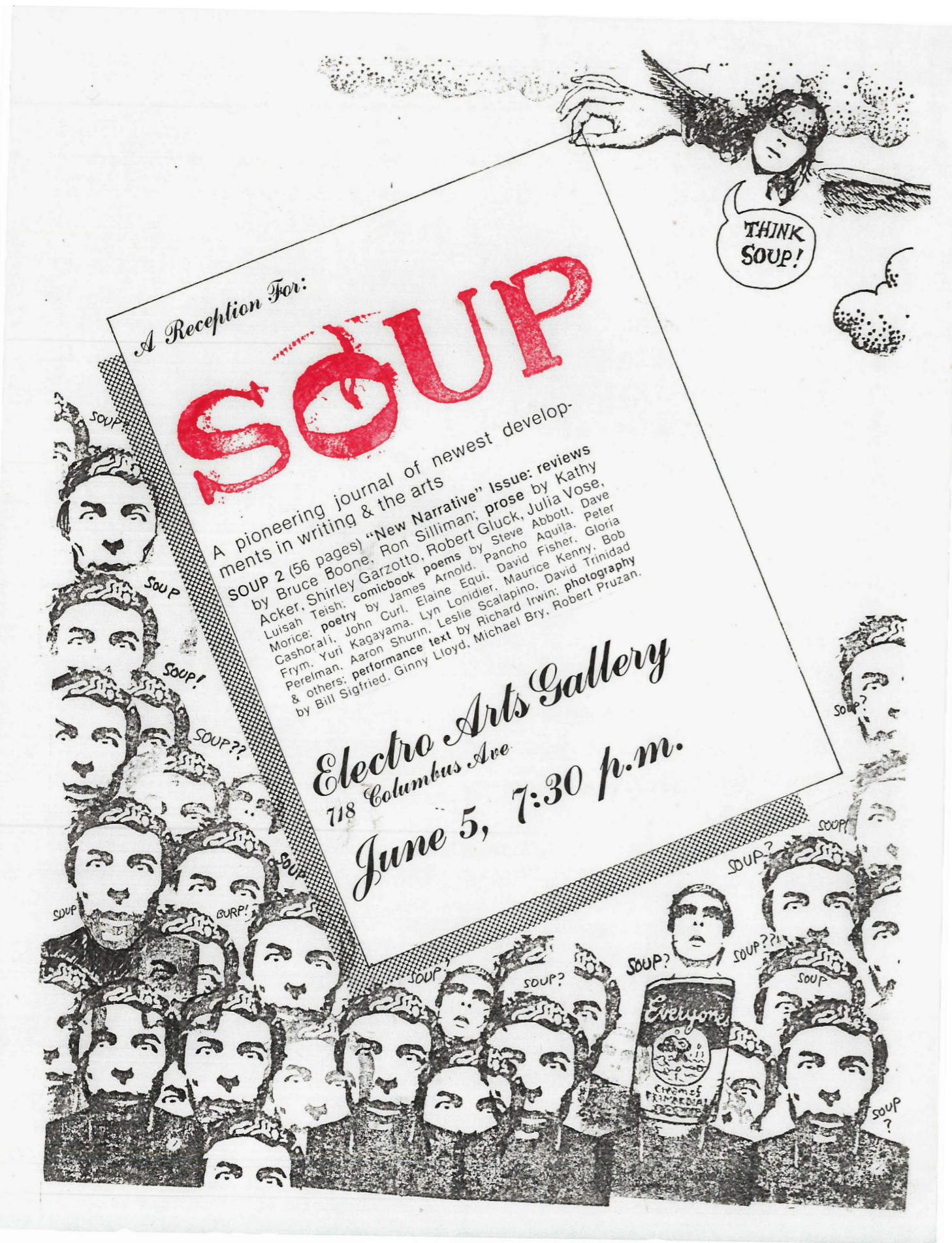
**LESLIE SCALAPINO**

TOM THOMPSON

**INTERSECTION** 756 UNION STREET TUES. JUNE 27 8:00 PM 1.50

#### 4. Soup / Left Write!

- \* A Reception for Soup flyer - 1981
- \* Left Write! program - 1981



R.G. Steve Abbot's *Soup*, launched in 1980, and the Left Write! conference in 1981 were two expressions of New Narrative, bringing together diverse identities, formal strategies, and left politics between magazine covers and under one roof. It's hard to imagine the leftist turmoil in San Francisco at that time. The Trotskyists, the Maoists, the Communist Party. The major events in the city's history in the twentieth century were refracted through the CP and labor activism.

**Left Write!** A Unity Conference of Writers on the Left

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1981**

**PANEL** 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. "How does writing arise from and affect our communities?"  
Robert Chrisman • Nellie Wong  
Judy Grahn • Alejandro Murguía

**WORKSHOPS**

2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

- PAST POLITICAL LESSONS**  
• Karen Brodine, David Plotke
- NATIVE AMERICAN WRITING**  
• Maurice Kenny, Wendy Rose, Frank La Pena, Jack Forbes, Duane Big Eagle, Janet Campbell
- BLACK WRITING**  
• Deborah Major, Darryl Gauff
- TRANSLATION AS A POLITICAL TOOL AGAINST POUNDISM**  
• Stephen Kessler, Kosrof Chantkian, Doreen Stock, Charles Belbin

**WORKSHOPS** 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

- THE POLITICS OF FEMINIST WRITING**  
• Gabrielle Daniels, Margo Rivers
- CHICANO POLITICAL WRITING**  
• Juan Felipe Herrera, Tomas Ybarra-Frausto, Yvonne Bejanaro-Yarbro, Alejandro Murguía
- AGITPROP: GETTING WORK OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY**  
• Leslie Simon, Kush, Artful Goodtimes

8:00 - Midnight **MUSIC AND PARTY**  
• Avotcja • Chris Tanner • Siu Wai Anderson • Phil Deal

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1981**

**PANEL** 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. "How can we best join in a unified political struggle?"  
William Mandel • Pat Parker  
Tillie Olsen • Ron Silliman

**WORKSHOPS**

2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

- WRITERS AS WORKERS**  
• R.V. Cottam, Enes Gomez
- ASIAN-AMERICAN WRITING**  
• Merle Woo and Others
- GAY AND LESBIAN POLITICAL WRITING**  
• Amber Hollibaugh, Jeff Escoffier, Eric Garber, and Roberta Yusbah
- CRITICISM AS A POLITICAL TOOL**  
• Al Richmond, Richard Irwin

**PLENARY** 4:00 p.m.  
Reports and Workshop Summations  
Resolutions and Motions • Open Meeting

**NOE VALLEY MINISTRY**  
1021 Sanchez, S.F.

**ADMISSION FOR TWO DAYS: \$5.00**  
Pre-Registration: Small Press Traffic, 3841B 24th St., S.F., 285-8394  
Registration at Noe Valley Ministry from 11:00 a.m. (limited to 200)  
Child Care: Call Steve Vincent 2 weeks in advance: 821-7684  
Wheelchair: 821-3004

Co-ordinators for Workshops: Robert Gluck, Wendy Rose, Deborah Major, Jack Hirschman, Ann Finger, Juan Felipe Herrera, John Curl, Susu Jeffrey, Merle Woo, Bruce Boone, Steve Abbot.

Poster Design & Typsetting: Kristin Wittichahn and William Garrett.

## 5. Rocking Lingam

Stoneware with underglaze - 2023



## 6. Original blurb for Jack The Modernist

by William S. Burroughs - 1985

- 2 All too often self exploration is intolerably  
dull scatching ones ME which is the least interesting  
thing about anyone. H in This book self ex loration is  
so precise as to become impersonal.. ' itchy skin  
above ribs lips and tos slightly prickly as if aselep  
3 intestinal sound like people moving around a house  
4 avoiding each other woodwind of empty room air  
arches between my ears my breath has the heavy lift  
of an airplane taking off.. deep hum at the same level  
as my breathing.. Intersting that this hum is  
a atage in jouneyes out of the body as described  
by Robert Monreo in his seminars. here the way  
in becomes the way out..
- 5 And some real sex at last. I know how difficult it is  
o write about sex and make it interesting even to  
some one who is not sexually aroused by the same  
signals.. One is reminded of Genet and the  
6 transmutation of sex into something beyond sex.  
7 He even managaes to makes the disappointments and  
impasses blind alleys of love moving an d  
interesting. Seemsto say everything ina fresh  
way..
- 9 Not since Genet have we seen such pure love of the  
8 human body and soul... seen as one flsh papable as  
a haze.

William Burroughs  
blurb for  
Jack

## 7. Excerpts from *Jack The Modernist*, 1985

\* Excerpt 1

The world, refused, gathers there, generating endless fertility of metaphor which supports rather than challenges the inevitability of Jack. I grab his cock, unpromising, and he says in mock bewilderment, 'What's that?' As it hardens I answer for him, 'It's my appendicitis, my inchworm, my slug, my yardstick, my viola da gamba, my World Trade Center, my banana, my statutory rape, my late string quartet, my garden god, my minaret, my magnum opus, my datebook, my hornet, my Giacometti, my *West Side Story*, my lance, my cannon, my nose-job, my hot dog, my little sparrow, my worm on the sidewalk after a storm, my candle, my Bic, my unicorn, my drawbridge, my white whale, my tuning fork, my divining rod, my cobra, my tooth, my noun, my horn, my asparagus, my vertical, my cyclops, my podium, my Picasso, my torpedo, my necktie, my subway strap, my intravenous injection, my lead singer, my church steeple, my bread stick, my chew stick, my joy stick, my beak, my shark, my trick guest chair, my metronome, my spout, my obelisk, my credit card, my sugar cane, my candy cane, my battering ram, my Roto-Rooter, my cigarette, my weasel, my fatherless child, my National Guard, my Rodin's *Balzac*, my fillet of gold, my meat thermometer, my submarine, my licorice stick, my fetish,

27

*Jack the Modernist*

my tree, my tuber, my piccolo, my flag pole, my bean stalk, my pipecleaner, my Spruce Goose, my Mother Goose, my *Venus of Willendorf*, my sandman, my whip, my hatrack, my electric eel, my boy scout by the campfire, my genie, my compass, my stamen, my newel post, my date palm, my Dark Tower.

I stopped a moment and looked at it—an elegance completely trustful of itself, erect and shiny. It equaled the intensity I was able to feel. I don't have a language to describe that intensity so I lack the thought. No wonder Jack, familiar out of bed, seemed like a stranger. What did I want from this flesh peninsula that made me so urgent? Sucking, stroking—a hopelessly inadequate language. I felt like biting it and shaking it by the shoulders and lifting it by the waist. I wanted to be its executioner and mourner. The concept of pleasure didn't touch the engagement and physical call: to touch it like the neck of the *Winged Victory*—a shower of blue sparks; to use it as a face cloth, a scrub brush; to bank it like money. I wanted it to be a place: to be unconscious there, to sleep there.

28



I walked home and sat down on my bed. My troubles were too numerous to consider all at once, their sheer quantity defeated me. My mom would say, 'Write a list, get a handle on your problems, deprive them of their active ingredient, time.' So I found a clean page in my yellow legal table and also the No. 2 pencil I swiped from Jack because his teeth had marked the wood. They were Jack's teeth but anyone could have done as much; I stole that intimacy and generality as a talisman. Nuclear catastrophe, destitution, famine, additives, melanomas, losing face, U.S. involvement in El Salvador and Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, South Korea, Chile, Lebanon and Argentina, war in the Middle East, genocide of Guatemalan Indians and extermination of the native peoples of Brazil,

Philippines, Australia, answering the telephone, resurgence of the Nazis, the KKK, auctioning off the U.S. wilderness, toxic waste, snipers, wrinkles, cult murderers, my car, Jack's safety, queer bashers, South Africa, being unloved, considered second rate, considered stupid, collapse of our cities, acid rain, the deforestation of the Amazon basin, nerve gas, the death of my mother, Poland, unsafe drugs, the CIA, herpes, PCBs, industrial hazards, oil slicks, killing of porpoises and sea life generally, baldness, the New Right, organized crime, lynchings, pogroms and rapes, the defense budget of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., Phyllis, video war games, destruction of the atmosphere, wasting of the soil through agri-business and strip mining, my death, storage of nuclear waste, heart attack, snipers, intestinal parasites, my parents' financial worries, *my* financial worries, blue whales, California condors, Bengal tigers, the Left, my aging, the brutality of the U.S. Meat packing industry (if there's such a thing as Karma we've had it), speaking in front of a room, cancer, Jack's reticence, pollution of the Mediterranean, anal warts, raising my hand and asking a question.

Feel better? I lie back on my bed and let my breath out. There is not so much sensation as you might think, a subtle emphasis marks the borders of my body—hands, feet, crotch and asshole more emphatic, more receptors, more expectation. I try to picture my dead self hosting the irrepressible life of worms and maggots but my own life returns as a shadow that only makes me more aware of feelings in inner mouth and tongue, my face pushing out, itchy skin above ribs, nipples like two pots gently stirred.

## 8. Jack The Modernist

First edition: Sea Horse Book / Gay Presses of New York - 1985

\$7.95

# JACK THE MODERNIST

## ROBERT GLÜCK

Robert Glück, "the most dazzling, innovative and relevant new writer among us," (*The Advocate*) first tackled the knot of violence, sexuality and power in a suite of stories, *Elements of a Coffee Service*.

In his first novel, *Jack the Modernist*, Glück continues to bring our culture into question by examining his own life. It's Glück's San Francisco, 1981—a world of loss which doesn't add up: cafes, allegories, bedrooms, phone calls, a funeral, a cartoon, a bathhouse, jokes, werewolves, a bar. Bob loves Jack, Joe-Toe loves Jack and Phyllis loses her son. Glück ventures as close as words can go to represent the body, then places Jack, Bob, Phyllis and Joe-Toe within the flux of history.

"Robert Glück has found a new way of making fiction passionate. This novel is a strange, exhilarating love story rich with invention and observation."—Edmund White.

"In this book self-exploration is so precise it becomes impersonal. Glück says everything in a fresh way—he makes the blind alleys of love interesting and moving.

And real sex at last. I know how difficult it is to write about sex and engage even someone who's not aroused by the same signals. Glück reminds one of Genet and the transmutation of sex into something beyond sex.

Not since Genet have we seen such pure love of the body and soul—seen as one palpable flesh."—William Burroughs

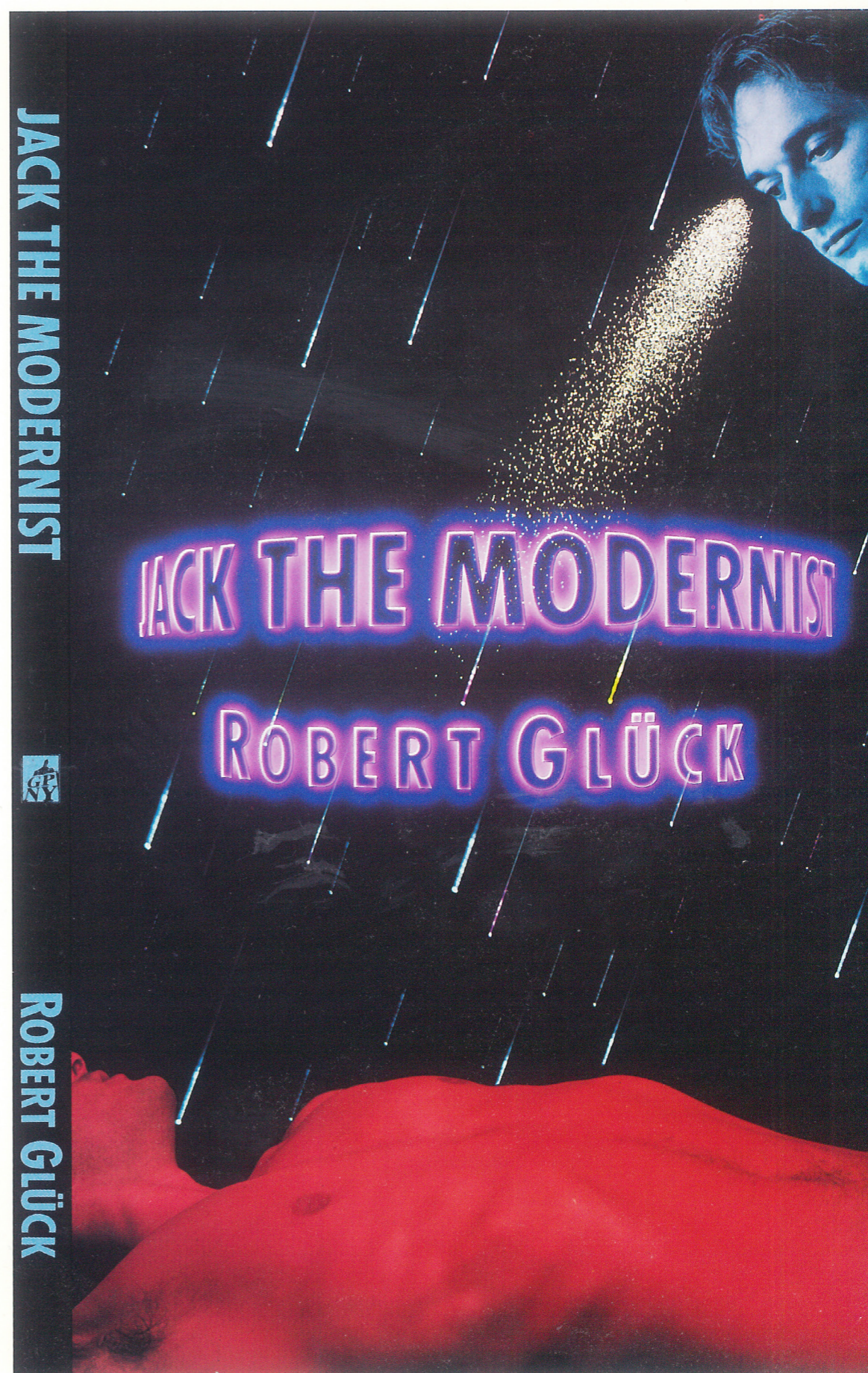
A SeaHorse Book



ISBN: 0-914017-11-X

Cover Photos—Stephen Savage  
Cover—Iris Photographic, San Francisco  
based on Duane Michael's "Peeping Tom"

G.P.N.Y.



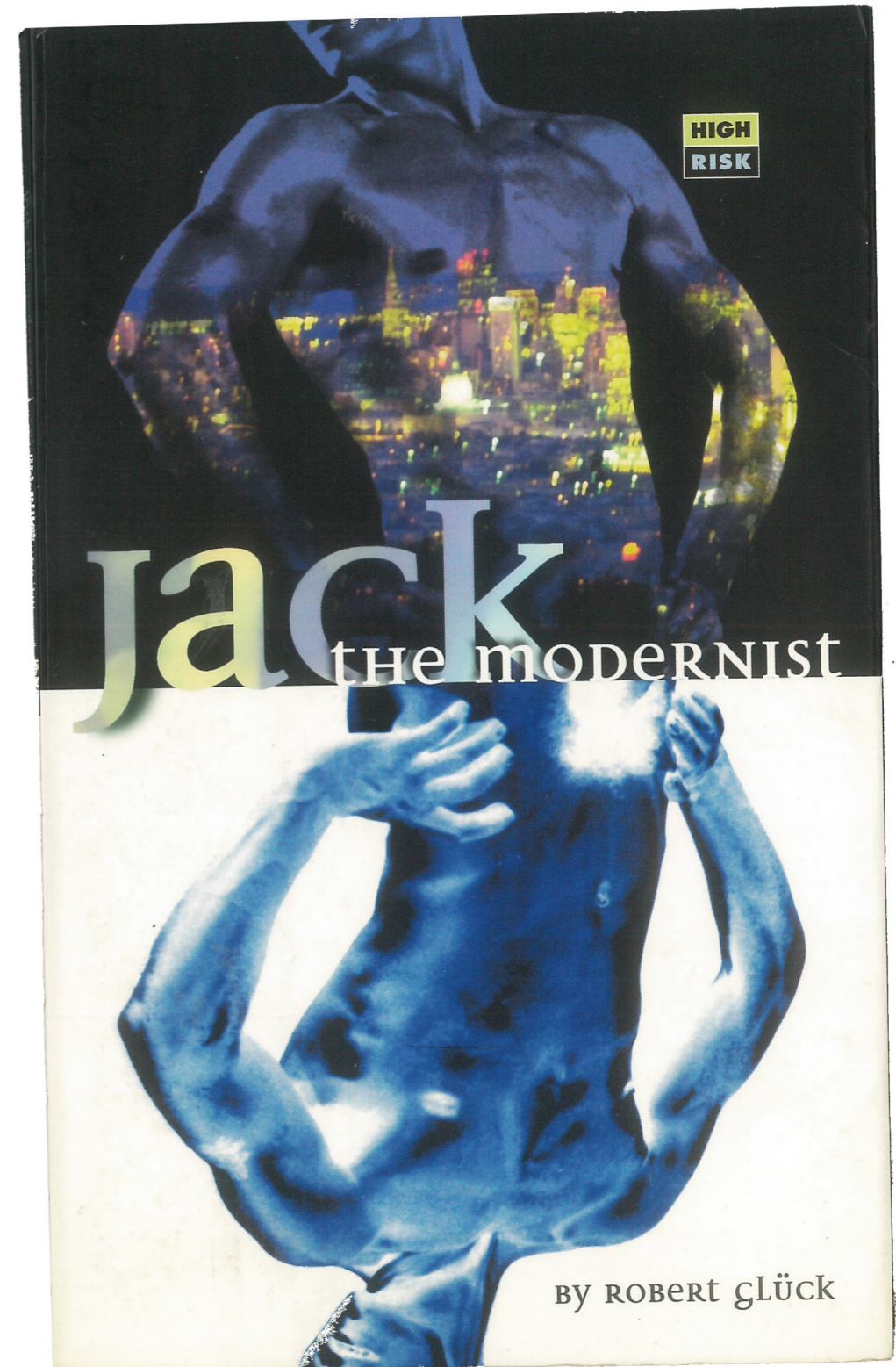
**9. Genie Bottle**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2019



**10. Jack The Modernist**

Second edition: High Risk Books - 1995



“What is going to happen to me?”--I ask the past. As though it were a genie answering one of three questions from the lip of a bottle, the past replies with a prediction that is also a command, “You are going to die.”

from a notebook



Chapter Nine

Jesus, when I feel the difference between my state  
and the necessity of life with you, I remove the decision  
I feel before meeting you in order to raise your spirit  
and I begin crying to remedy my state which became  
and change. My face is rigid, my arms and legs are weak,  
and confusion grows inside and outside to gain. There  
is a hearing in my chest, a sixth sense, the continuous  
awareness of your body. I enlarge myself by equating your  
madness towards me with the pain of your death. My  
eyes look open and men and women spoil off my face.

I'm on my stomach in a nice chapel at St.  
Margaret. My husband press against the floor, gas comes

through the side of my gas, my hot cheek grinds on the  
stone. My crying is choked, I curl into a ball and stretch,  
an impossible shape. I get myself in your body in the  
quantity is so high it beams upwards. You need not as you  
did at first.

Did you meet because the opposite being  
meets—disorder, the strangeness of what's happening to  
me. Then don't touch but concentrate on. The more I need  
you, the deeper the strangeness, the stronger my  
desire—direct in the movement of love.

I'm so tired of being alone. I swim through my  
ears to the back of my head to observe this, my crying rings  
like a woman's breath. The more alone I go to  
enter you inside towards me in a rickety man, one leg  
keeps crying on, you cry with complete understanding. "If  
it weren't for my head I could go on forever." He did not  
touch other arms and as we grow I realize, a willing feel-  
ing of life which now runs your mindless. I become  
around as the sweet other makes my proper one. I promise  
that I will see you—your eyes darken and your face rolls  
away. The touch of honey spreads as I ride the plunger.  
Your tongue is soft as the metal slapper of a ball, purple-  
brown like burnt iron. Everything wanted. I witness my  
senses with excitement—who would have done!

In my black monotonous weeping, I wonder at the  
very sense of suffering's requirement that you are, my love is  
you do, back to—a baffling condition—oh my pain at  
my mind weep out as fiery tears. That weathers comes a touch  
of pleasure in how hard. Carrots could through out in the  
disease. When I finish crying I'm empty, drained.

Whatever my man and I do not enjoy food, drink  
or talk, there is no flower until I weep again.



**11. Lingam Ghosts and Universes**

Stoneware with underglaze - 2023



**12. Make-It-Stop Rattle (Bob)**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2016

**13. Make-It-Stop Rattle (Xavi)**

Stoneware with underglaze - 2023

**14. Make-It-Stop Rattle (Bob)**

Stoneware with underglaze - 2023

**15. Make-It-Stop Rattle (Emily)**

Stoneware with underglaze - 2023

**16. Make-It-Stop Rattle (Janet)**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze 2018

**17. Make-It-Stop Rattle (Xavi)**

Stoneware with underglaze - 2023



**Make-It-Stop Rattles**  
Bob & Xavi



18. from **About Ed** - Poster

Then his tongue was squirming inside  
me, reshaping me from the inside.  
My anus was spinning clay on a potter's  
wheel and Jim was making vase shapes  
with his tongue. He said, Shiva owns the place,  
and I thought, that seems right:  
throwing pots with his thousand hands.

from About Ed

19. from a **notebook** - Poster

“What is going to happen to me?”--I ask  
the past. As though it were a genie answering  
one of three questions from the lip of a  
bottle, the past replies with a prediction that  
is also a command, “You are going to die.”

from a notebook

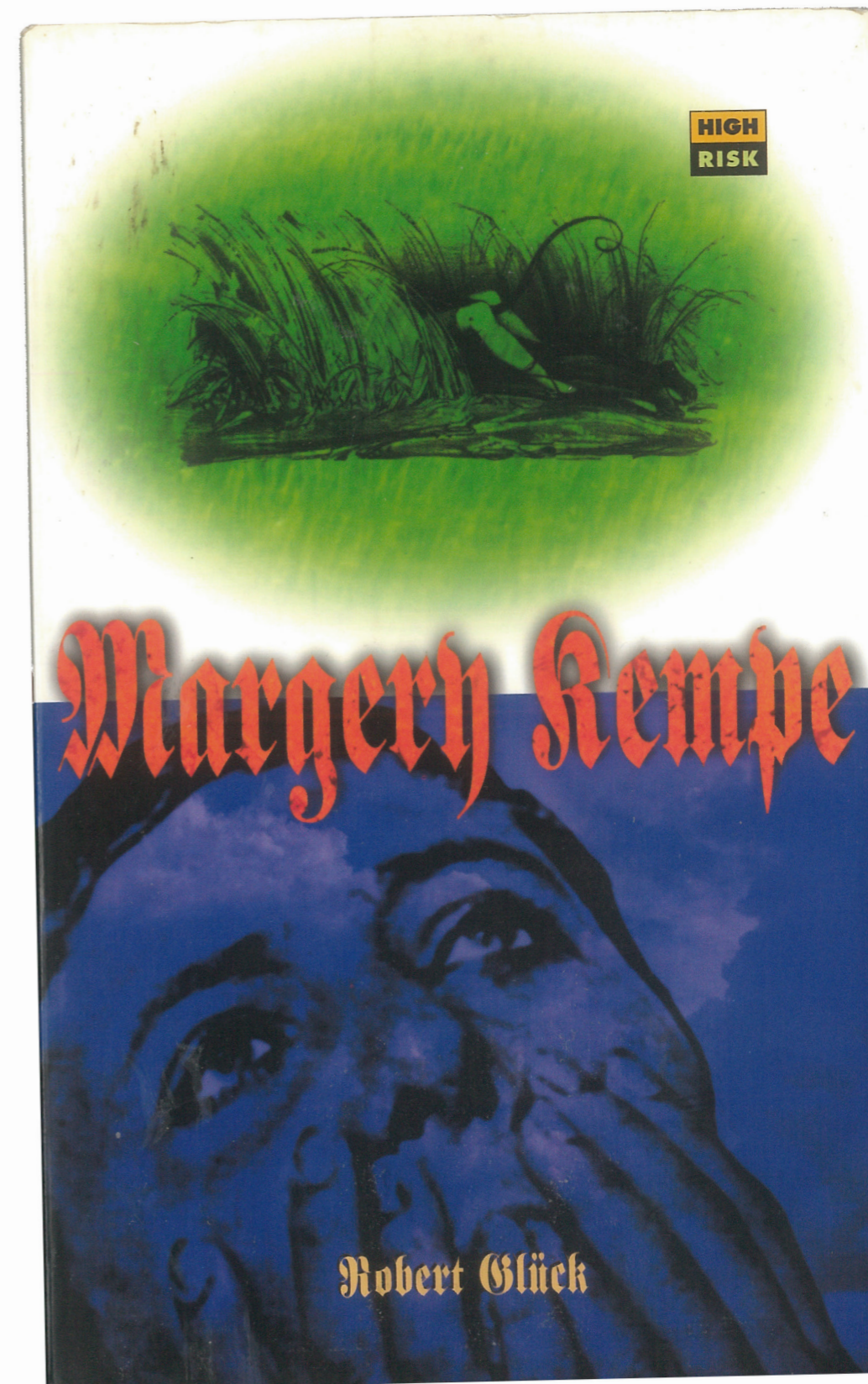
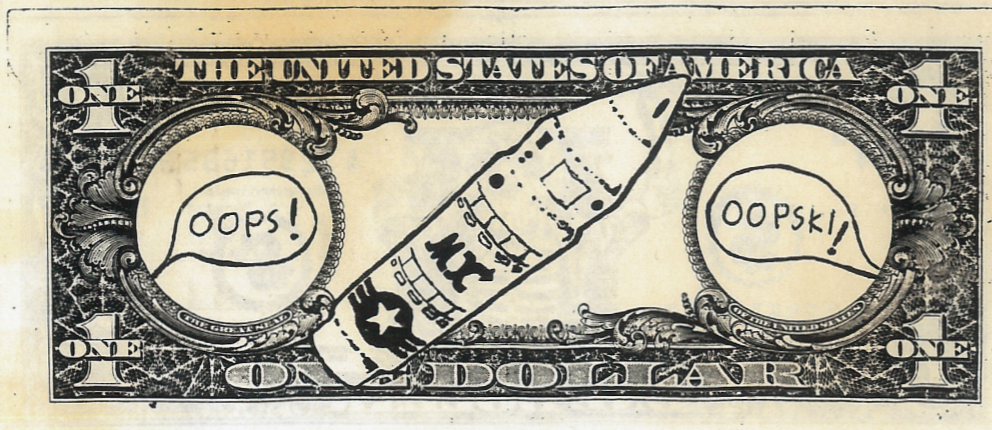
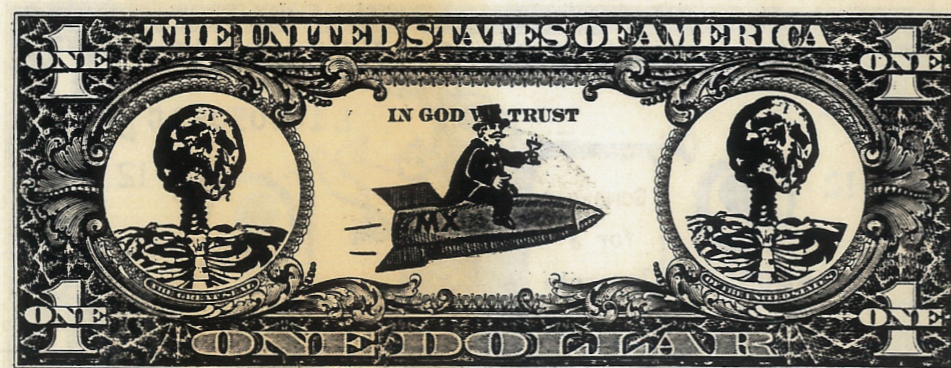
20. **Enola Gay** agitprop

double sided - 1984



**21. Margery Kempe**

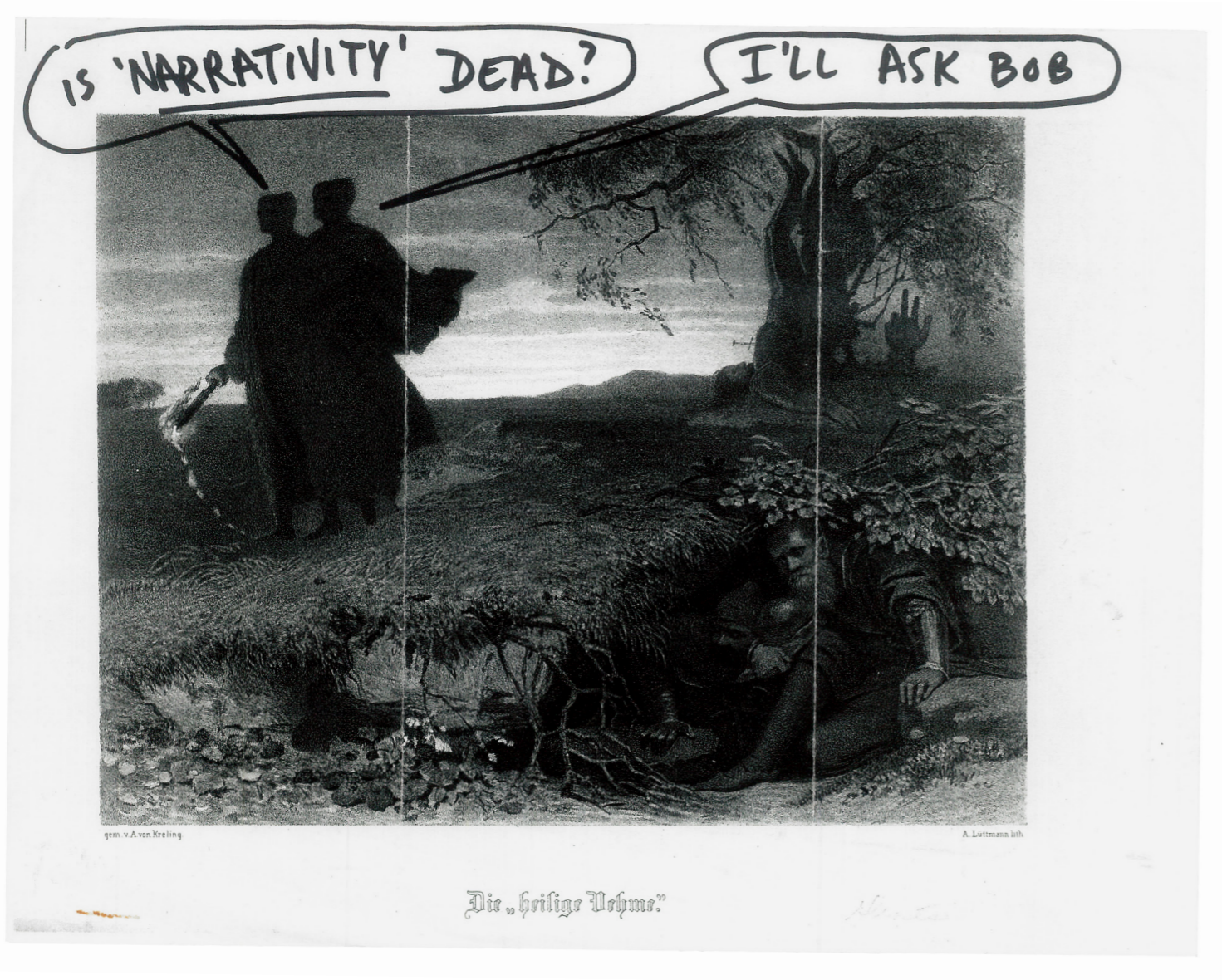
First edition: High Risk Books - 1994





## 22. Is "Narrativity" Dead?

Gift from a student



## 23. Ghosts and Universes Rattle

Stoneware with underglaze - 2022



24. Margery Kempe's Manuscript

annotated by Robert Glück

A flock of angels <sup>trace</sup> their hands, <sup>a</sup> tender <sup>farewell</sup> ~~greeting~~ their wings open <sup>together</sup> in a <sup>reptile</sup> of common destiny, rose, teal, white <sup>and</sup> pale yellow.

MARGERY KEMP  
Proem

~~Something about wings or birds~~

~~This is the story of Margery Kemp. The shift from belief in a~~

~~common destiny to anxiety about personal destiny--about death--is~~

~~first the story of a woman failed to become a saint, and wrote the~~

first autobiography in English. Margery lacked a criteria for

the discernment of spirits. A failure that I respond to

permeates her book; inadequate faith. At the same time, I read ~~her book~~

<sup>in the spirit of self-preservation to discover it</sup> to see if she can accomplish with her will what faith could not accomplish.

Which is not to say she lacked faith. She relates her 15th century story as we tell an anecdote--taking a lot for granted.

The taste of an apple, the name of a country, all the ecstasy of description. Since I have less faith in existence, I am obliged to describe it more thoroughly.

I had Margery Kemp in mind for twenty years--she represented for me the articulation of awkward faith in the value of

experience itself. I could not understand how to approach her passion for Jesus until I experienced a similarly clumsy

aspiration in my love for a young man who was above me,

lyrical and wealthy, who declined to change my life--so let this story change it. What does characterize a god: his larger

context, a predetermination that meaning stays with him,

① they gaze outward <sup>at the</sup> with fixed attention at the central point of the story; they

24. Excerpt from Margery Kempe

Chapter Nine

# Margery Kempe

## Chapter Nine

Jesus, when I feel the difference between my stale life and the ecstasy of life with you, I revive the desolation I felt before meeting you in order to coax your appearance. I begin crying so intently my voice sounds hoarse and strange. My face is rigid, my arms and legs are weak, and civilization grows tender and sensitive to pain. There is a bleating in my chest, a sixth sense, the continuous awareness of your body. I enlarge myself by equating your tenderness towards me with the pain of your death. My jaws lock open and tears and mucus spool off my face.

I'm on my stomach in a side chapel at St. Margaret's. My hipbones press against the floor, gas moves

9/25/66

## 25. Ghosts and Universes Rattle

Stoneware with underglaze - 2023

through the side of my gut, my hot cheek grinds on the stone. My crying is choked; I curl into a ball and clench, an impossible shape. I put myself in your body. Its frequency is so high it heaves upwards. You need me as you did at first.

Into our most intense union the opposite feeling enters—disorder, the strangeness of what's happening to me. Tears don't stop but convulsions do. The more I need you, the deeper the estrangement, the stronger my desire—a defect in the movement of love.

I'm so tired of being alone. I swim through my tears to the back of my head to observe this, my crying regular as a swimmer's breath. That retreat allows ghosts to enter: you stumble towards me as a rickety man, one leg keeps caving in; you say with complete understanding, "If it weren't for my body I could go on forever." We fall into each other's arms and as we grieve I rejoice, a welling feeling of life which now even pain stimulates. I become aroused as a flat sweet odor makes my gorge rise. I promise that I will save you—your eyes darken and your face rolls away. The stench of decay spreads as I make the pledge. Your tongue is stiff as the metal clapper of a bell, purple-brown like burnt iron. Everything wasted. I witness my anguish with excitement—who would reject *more life*?

In my bleak monotonous weeping, I wonder at the very terms of suffering's argument: that you *are*, my love *is*, you *die*, flesh *is*—a baffling confirmation—it's not *pain* or *joy* until wept out as *fiery tears*. That outburst causes a tooth of pleasure to bite hard. Currents travel through me to the distance. When I finish crying I'm empty, exalted.

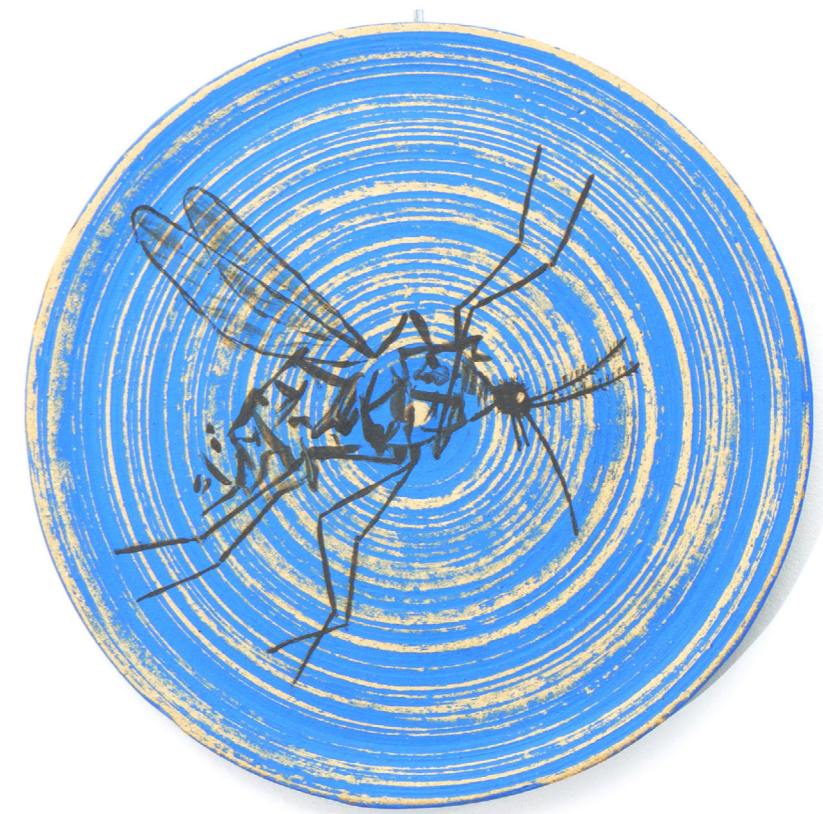
Withdraw my tears and I do not enjoy food, drink, or talk; there is no flavor until I weep again.



**27. Lingam for Martin Wong**  
Stoneware with underglaze - 2023

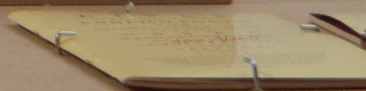
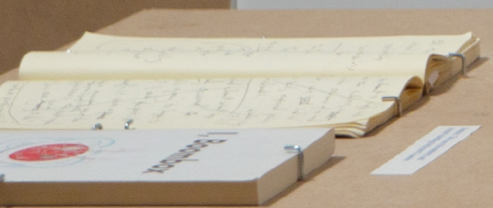


**28. Mosquito Plate 1**  
Stoneware with underglaze - 2023



**29. Mosquito Plate 2**  
Stoneware with underglaze - 2023



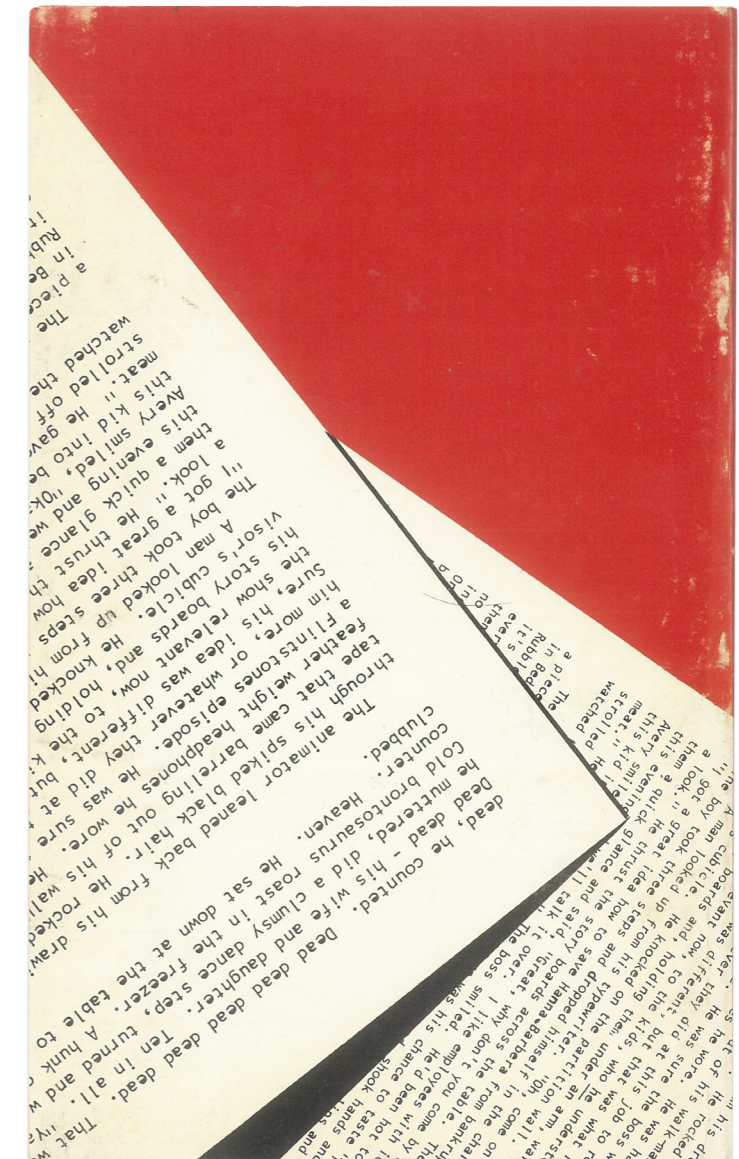
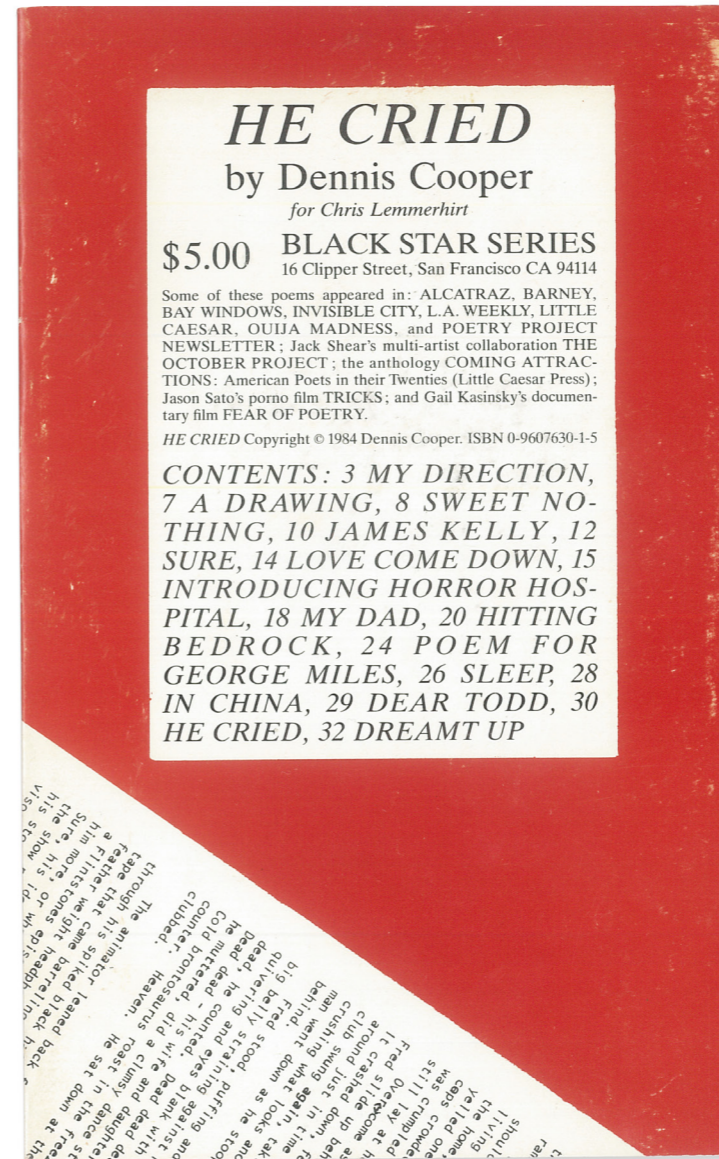


# Black Star Series

## 30. Dennis Cooper - *He Cried* Black Star Series - 1984

R.G: In 1978, Bruce Boone and I launched the Black Star Series. We did not want to break the back of representation or to “punish” it for lying, but to elaborate narration on as many different planes as we could, which seemed consistent with the lives we led. We appreciated the comedy of mounting an offensive (“A critique of the new trends toward conceptualization, linguistic abstraction and process poetry”) with those slenderest volumes.

from “Long Note on New Narrative”



31. Corrected proof for Dennis Cooper's *He Cried*

Annotated by Dennis Cooper and Robert Glück

32. Steve Abbott - *Lives of the Poets*

Black Star Series - 1987

For Chris Lemmerhirt  
~~For Ziggy Kravner~~

④ My Direction  
 ① A Drawing  
 ② Sweet Nothing  
 ② James Kelly  
 ② Sure  
 ① Dear Todd  
 ①/⑤ Introducing NH  
~~② Dear Todd~~  
 ② My Dad  
 ④ Hitting Bedrock  
 ② Poem for G.M.  
 ② Sleep  
 ① In China  
~~② He Cried~~  
 ① Love Come Down  
 ② He Cried  
 ① Dreamt Up

would you like to exchange any of the poems of equal length?  
 For ex,  
 Love Come Down for Dear Todd,

Yes, exchange "Love Come Down" for "Dear Todd". Otherwise the order is just fine.

u.0-u.1-tr./glück • 2/20

MY DIRECTION

I was looking at some paintings in a gallery. Until the last few years, I couldn't have understood them. They were paint. Now they were life, as I understood it. I believed what I saw in them to be pain, although nicely painted. That was the point, but I couldn't explain them further. The gallery space was attractive: cool, white, spacious, and empty. The person propped at the desk at the back was congratulated. He smiled at me. "Like them?" "Yes, quite a bit." "Sure?" He was sweet and ironic, like I'd behave in this instance, confronting a stranger. I spent a few more minutes before the paintings, then walked out. They stayed with me; ideas sketched crudely on less crudely painted pictures of familiar things. So you could see them both—the bottom layer more fully, the top layer more quickly. A cartoon character danced on the faces of immigrants from Poland. I walked several blocks to my car, which took me home. Home was as white and empty as the gallery was.

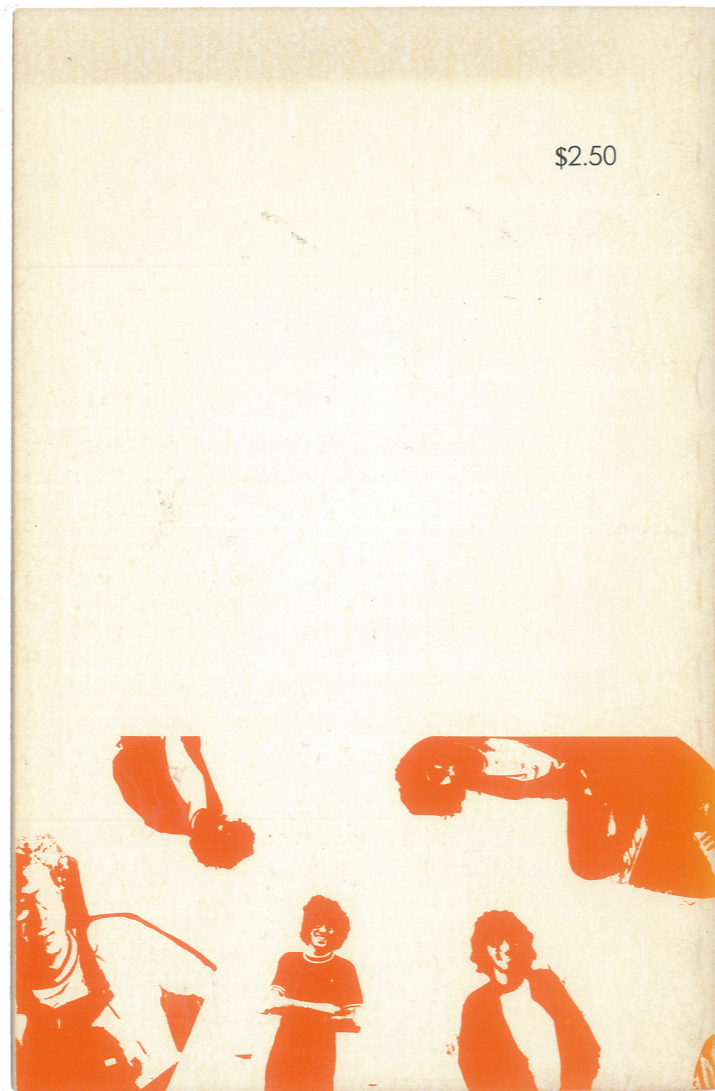
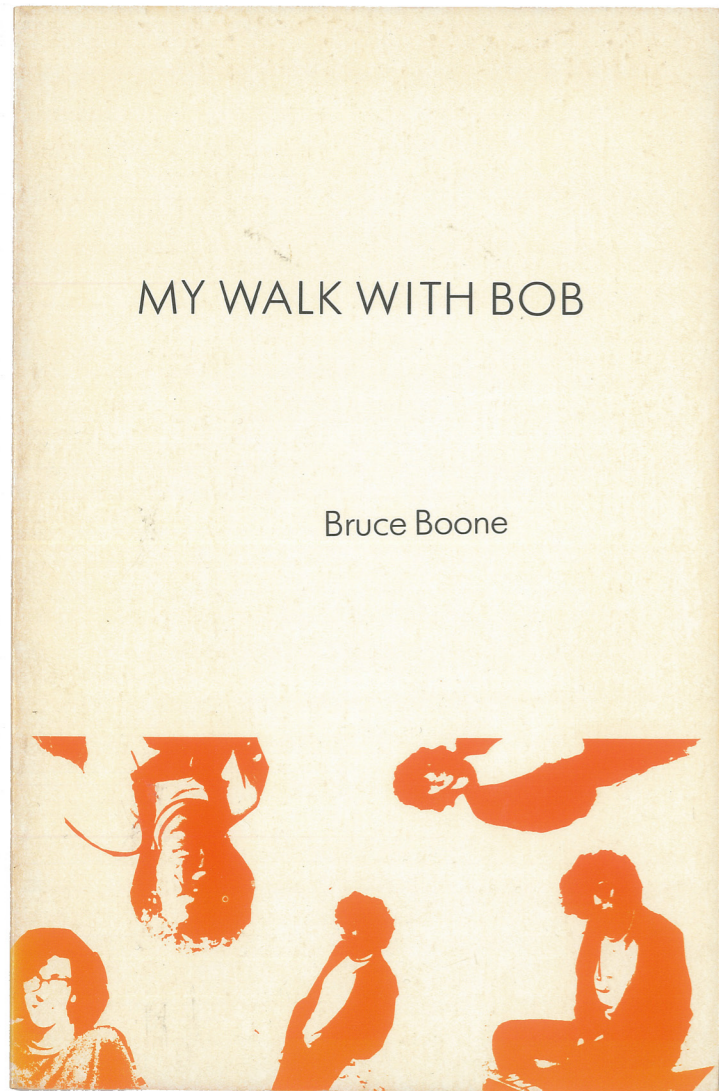
man in

THE  
 L I V E S  
 OF THE MOST EMINENT  
 ENGLISH POETS;  
 WITH  
 CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS  
 ON THEIR  
 W O R K S.  
 By SAMUEL JOHNSON:  
 Steve Abbott  
 IN FOUR VOLUMES.  
 VOLUME I.  
 L O N D O N:  
 PRINTED FOR C. BATHURST, J. BUCKLAND, W. STRAHAN, J. RIVINGTON AND SONS, T. DAVIES, T. PAYNE, L. DAVIS, W. OWEN, R. WHITE, S. CROWDER, T. CASLOW, T. LONGMAN, B. LAW, G. BILLY, J. DODDLEY, J. WILKIE, J. ROBSON, J. JOHNSON, T. LOWNDEN, C. ROBINSON, T. CADELL, J. NICHOLS, E. NEWBERRY, T. EVANS, P. ELSLEY, J. REULEY, R. HALDWIN, G. NICOL, LEIGH AND SOTHEBY, J. BEW, N. CONANT, W. NICOLL, J. MURRAY, S. HAYES, W. FOX, AND J. BOWEN.  
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\$5

**33. Bruce Boone - My Walk With Bob**

Black Star Series - 1979



**34. Bruce Boone - My Walk With Bob**

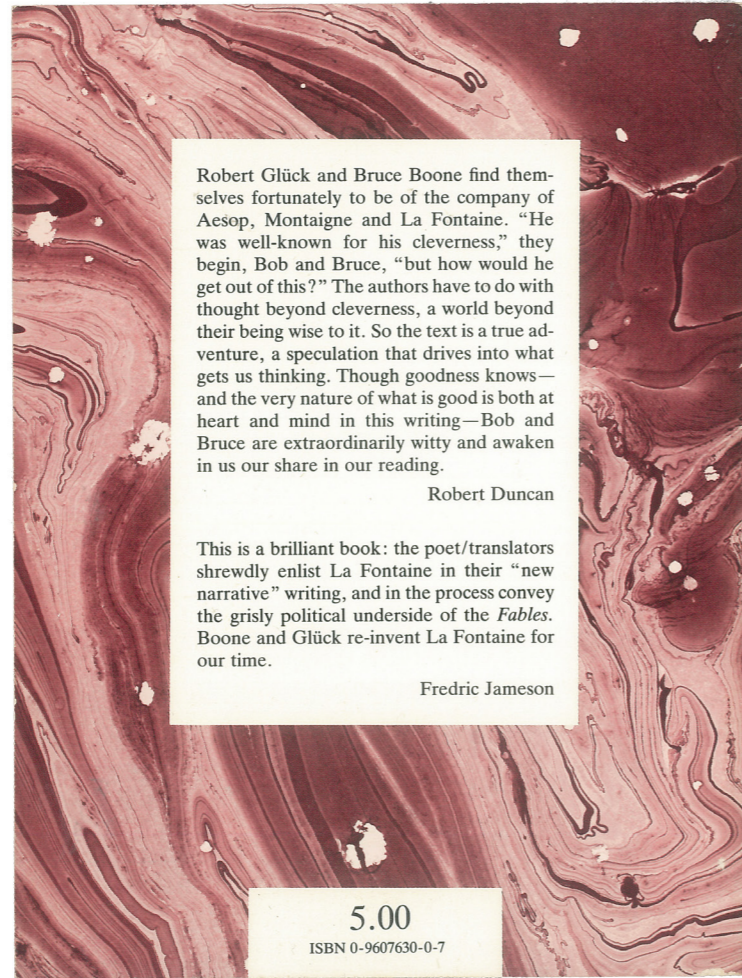
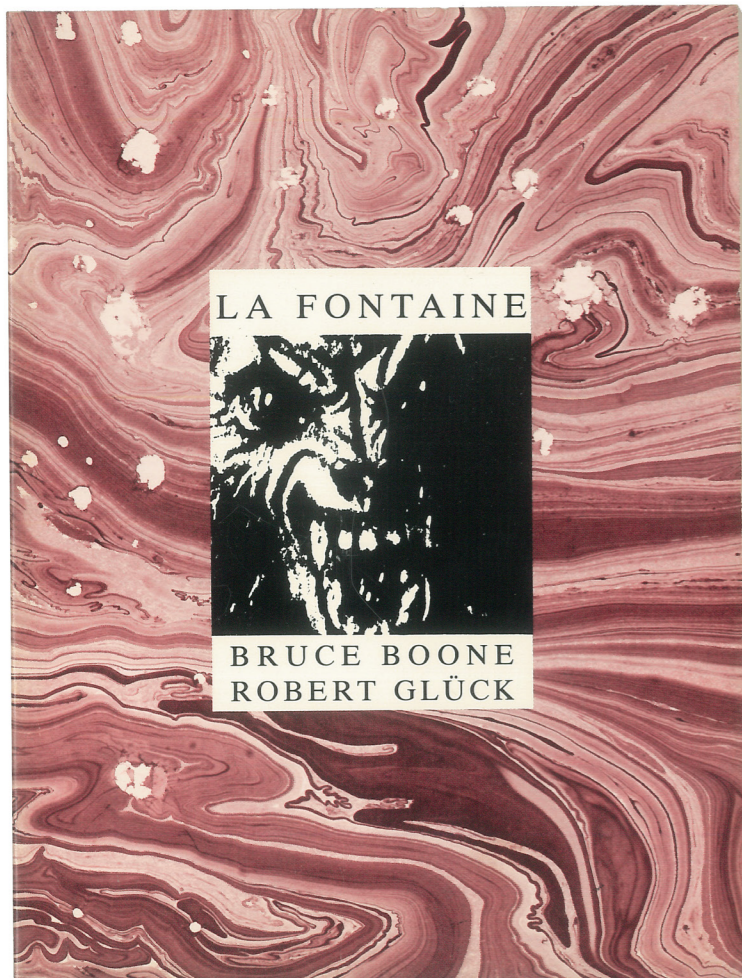
Ithuriel's Spear - 2006





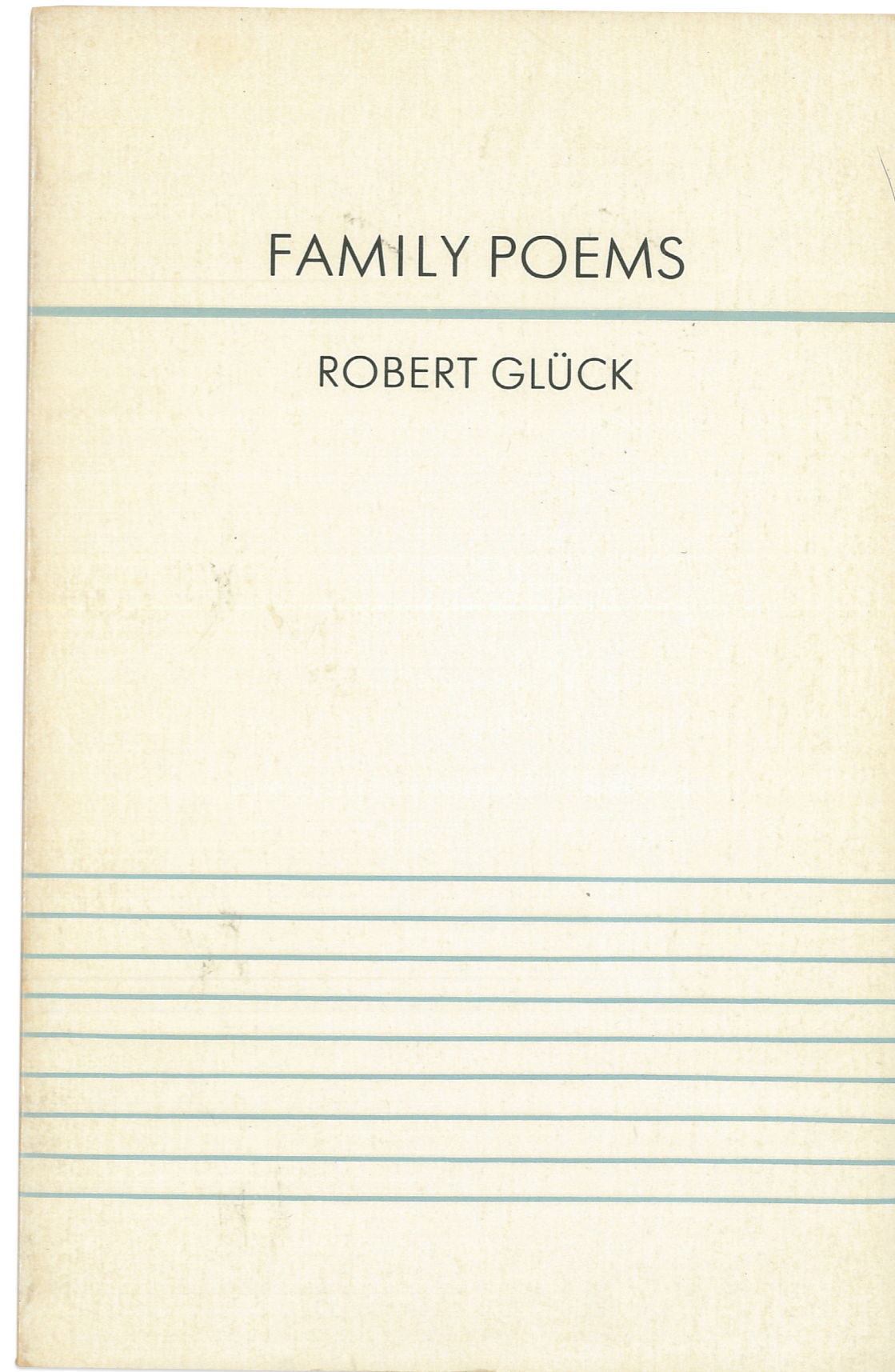
**35. Bruce Boone, Robert Glück - *La Fontaine***

Black Star Series - 1981



**36. *Family Poems***

Black Star Series - 1979



**37. Lingam**

Stoneware with underglaze - 2023



**38. Lingam Fascinator**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2023



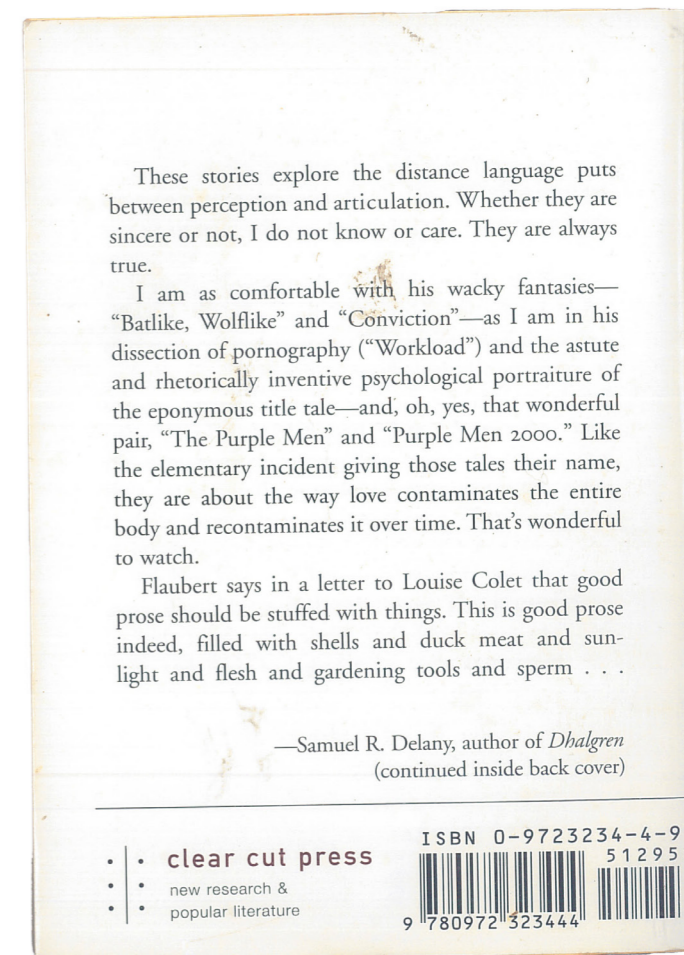
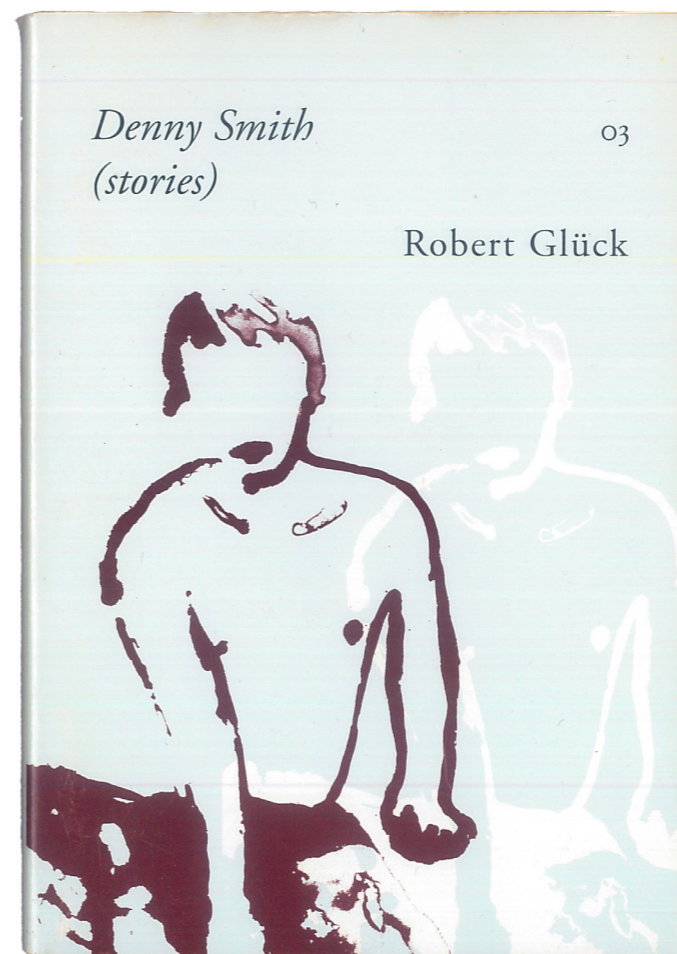
**39. Lingam for Agnes Martin**

Stoneware with underglaze - 2022



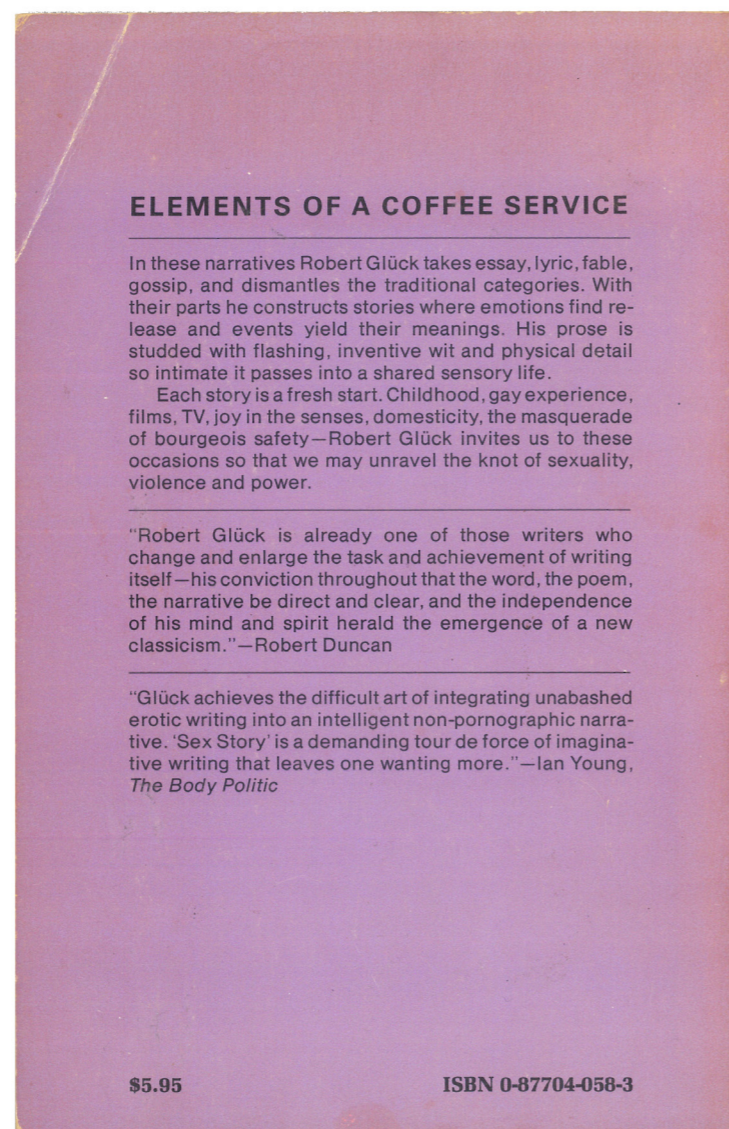
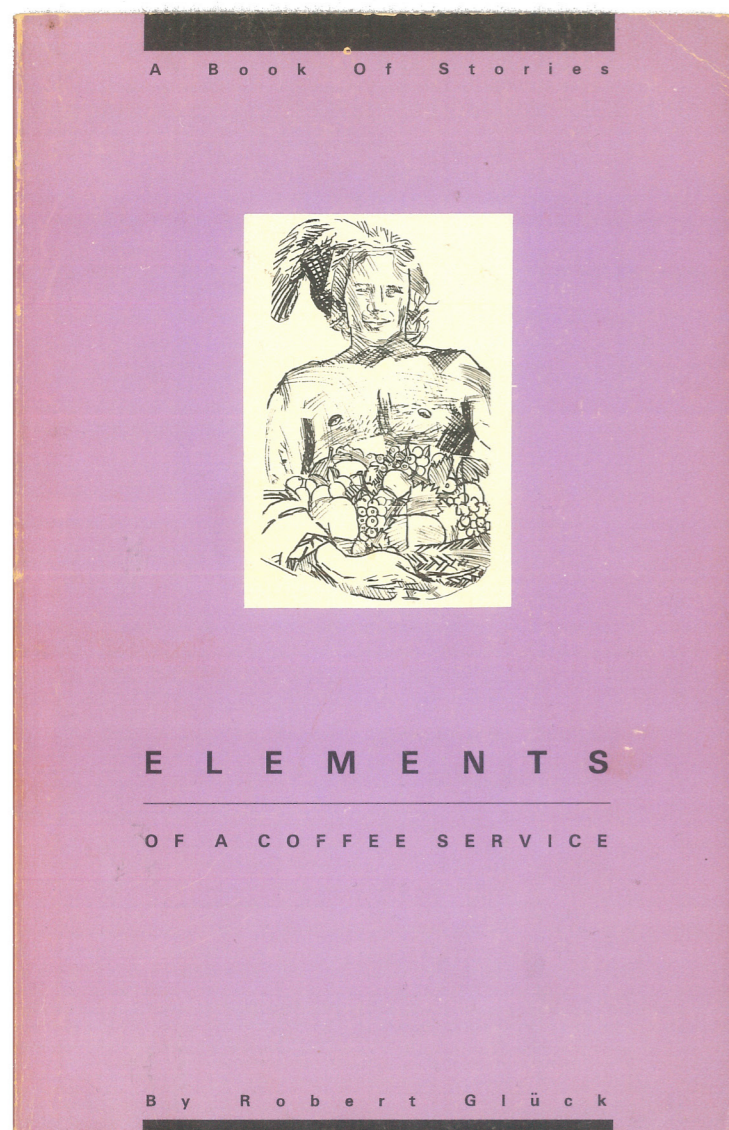
**40. Denny Smith**

(stories) - Clear Cut Press - 2003



## 41. Elements of a Coffee Service

A Book Of Stories - First Edition: Four Seasons - 1982



## 42. Lingam

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2022



# I, Boombox



Robert Glück



*I, Boombox* is fashioned from my misreadings. In that sense, it's an autobiography in which I dream on the page. It is my version of the modernist long poem: published in sections and interrupted only by the author's death.

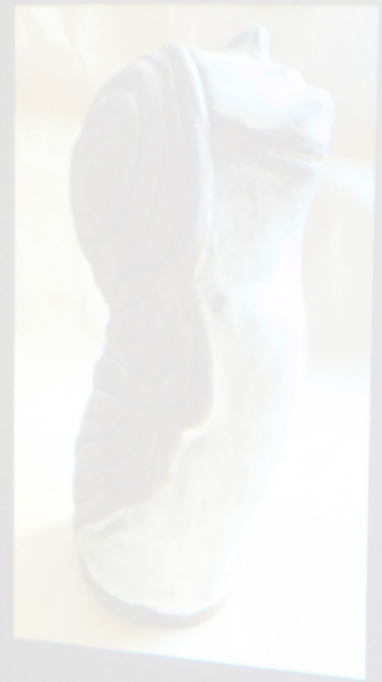
R.G.: This is one of the notebooks I used to record misreadings for the poem I, Boombox.

Ed's things - possessions  
reveal their lack of interior  
Necessity - among possessions  
count the will to live

The Dubore Paris  
Metro  
the giant throws cocks at me  
or even just to be in the  
presence of her needles  
see red for a home,  
ten years (?) of thinking  
about that moment to  
realize what -

without a single word  
on the subject, ~~without~~  
in the absence of the word  
love, we ~~had~~ lived soul  
to soul, exposed. perilous  
Nakedness. <sup>the holdy stage</sup>  
FOH

fearful about what has  
already occurred. ~~to~~  
what is going to happen to  
me? I ask the past. As  
though it were a ~~genie~~  
genie answering one of those  
questions <sup>from the lips of a battle</sup> the past replies,  
"you are ~~going~~ going to die"  
with a prediction that is also  
a command.



Ceramic work from the 1970s



volume 23 / number 22 / June 2, 1994

HEDGECOCK: LIGHT UP THE BORDER — BUILD APARTMENTS - SEE PAGE 5

# SAN DIEGO'S WEEKLY Reader

*What  
We Love  
Chooses  
Us*

## SAN DIEGO'S SECRET GARDENS

I have a little garden. It is the most closely watched patch of earth in my experience. My attention is born on an interest in obsession and in horticulture. When I go out with a cup of coffee or a book, I find myself on my hands and knees in no time, weeding, or just looking at the progress of some slow-growing miniature ivy, or an orchid stalk, or a delirium tremens of ants. *(continued on page 16)*

BY ROBERT GLÜCK & PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIK HANSON

*What  
We  
Love  
Chooses  
Us*

## SAN DIEGO'S SECRET GARDENS

*(continued from page 1)*

Where there are ants there is trouble.

Jean Genet wrote, "The most beautiful flower in the garden was the gardener." It was with affection for the gardener that I decided to visit some San Diego gardens in early March. The gardens I chose are at least occasionally open to the public as parts of tours led by the San Diego Floral Association.

**SALLY LONG** Sally is a petite woman with a sense of order about her. Perhaps she's in her late 40s. Her speech is precise, and her garden, which contains 280 roses, conveys an impression of order. It is a rose garden, and Sally is a rose person.

Sally collects rose sculptures and artifacts, paints roses, speaks about them at garden clubs, judges rose shows. She belongs to ten rose societies, and she writes a bulletin out of the East County Rose Society.

Sally's been judging for ten years. She travels as far away as New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona. Her friends are rose people. Going out to dinner is a rose experience. How does her husband Jim deal with this? "He's not a rose person, but he's such a nice guy they include him in everything."

Sally and Jim live in East San Diego, in a new development that floats in comfort and shelter above the every-street-is-the-street-to-the-airport banality. "Sometimes I feel as if I'm going into the Twilight Zone, coming up from the hectic street to the gate, then everybody waves and children play and everybody goes slow." Her neighbors are teachers, policemen, and firemen, and they have an unusual camaraderie. They throw parties together, for example. Sally colonizes their gardens. Across the street grow 60 of her roses, and they extend down the block.

I visit Sally's garden in March, an attractive time, I think, when the bones of the garden are visible along with the sculptural shapes of the pruned roses and the textures and colors of their leaves. As opposed to some, I don't think roses are ugly unless they are blooming. Still, I can see that a month or two will transform her garden into masses of blooms, level on level of them.

We sit on her porch, drinking tangerine juice. Her garden is composed of a variety of plantings that flow into each other around a lawn. There are no square lines. Sally was full of demurs, a defining characteristic of the obsessed gardener — I'm redoing that corner, I'm planning a bridge, etc.

The San Diego climate will accommodate most anything, and there is no time-honored vernacular here, like the cottage garden in England or formal garden in France. Since you can choose anything, why roses?

Sally is stumped. "I think they chose me," she says in a wondering voice. It's a satisfying answer. I have come to the right place. Dante, that fanatical lover, said what we love chooses us, not the other way around, and he added that we are named by that love.

16 San Diego Reader June 2, 1994

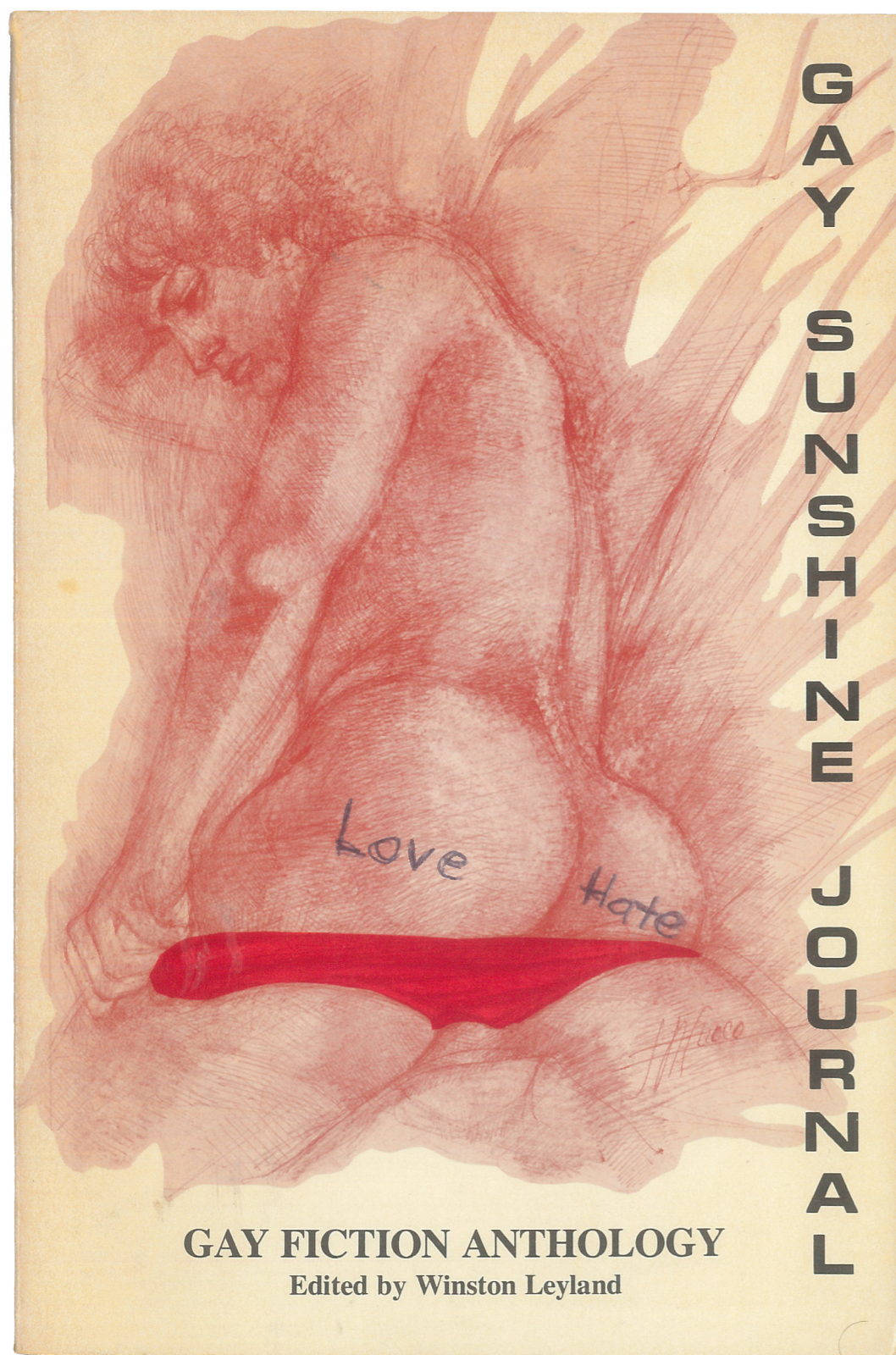
**R.G:** Mr. Plantier. I had a minor career as a garden writer. I was asked to do a cover article for the free press of San Diego, the "Reader". I said, I don't know a lot about anything, but I do know about obsession, so I will interview five obsessed gardeners. They liked the result and offered me a job, which lead to writing for the "shelter" magazines.



**45. Gay Sunshine Journal**

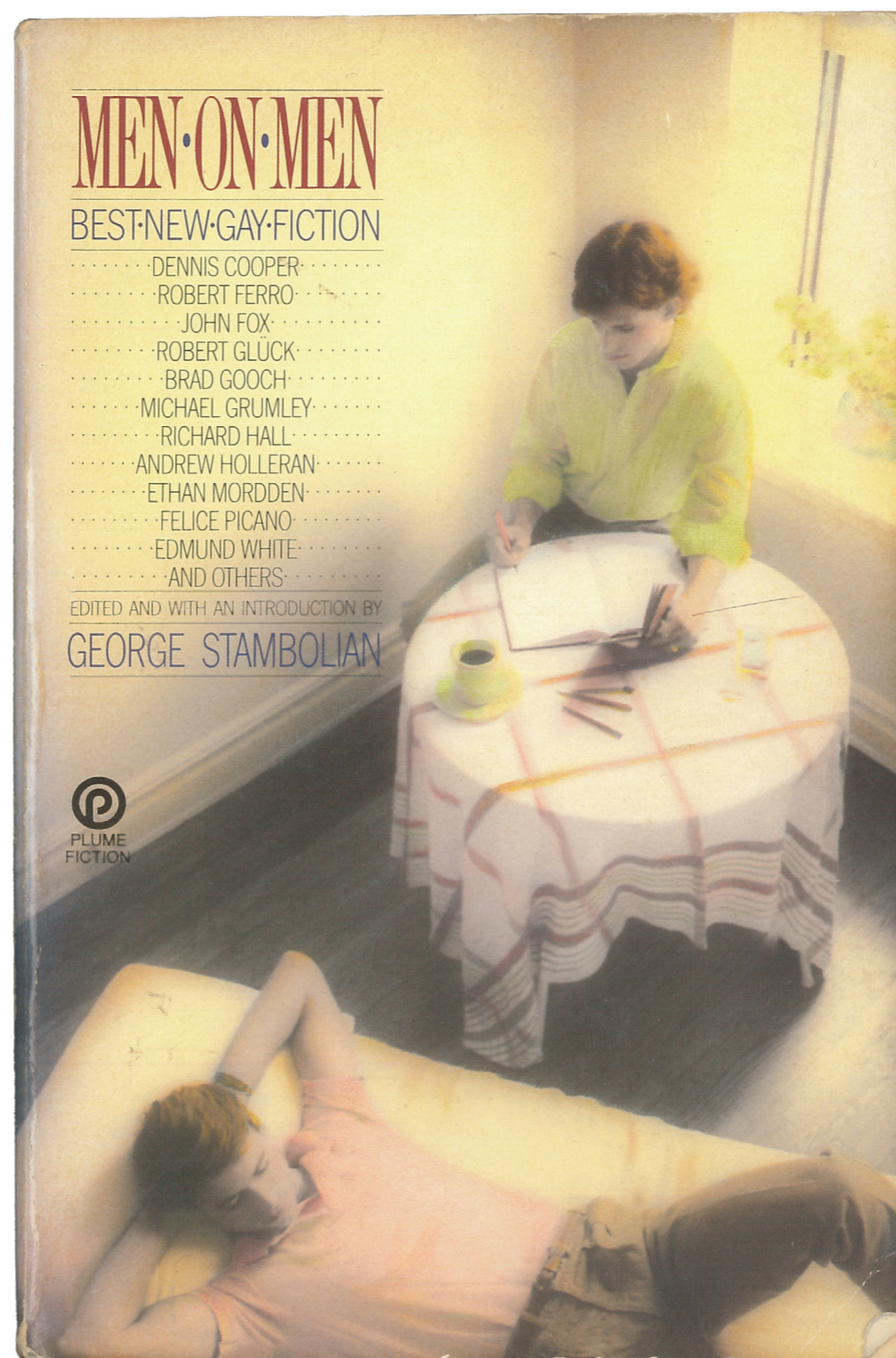
Gay Fiction Anthology - 1981

“Love / Hate” annotation on the cover by Robert Glück



**46. Men on Men: Best New Gay Fiction, Volume 1**

Plume - edited by George Stambolian - 1986



R.G: When George Stambolian started editing the Men on Men series (first published in 1986 by Plume, part of New American Library) a gay readership was still a question to the large commercial New York publishers. The vast majority of queer writing had been published by small, independent presses like “Gay Sunshine”. Who would buy these books? Moreover, the queer writing that New York publishers did promote was mostly New York centric and based in the English novel tradition, not New Narrative from far-off San Francisco. George was a French professor, and I believe that allowed him to see the value of more adventurous work influenced by French writers like Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot, and by European theory appearing in the United States at that time by Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin, Julia Kristeva, and the rest. George gave New Narrative its first large stage.

**47. Genie Bottle (Xavi)**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2020



**48. Gay Sunshine**

A Journal of Gay Liberation - n°32 - Spring 1977



R.G. That's me—drawn by my lover Ed Aulerich-Sugai. Oddly, the German activist director Rosa von Praunheim, in his appearance at the Castro Theater to promote a new film, used this image to demonstrate to us, his audience, that the San Francisco gay community is headless.

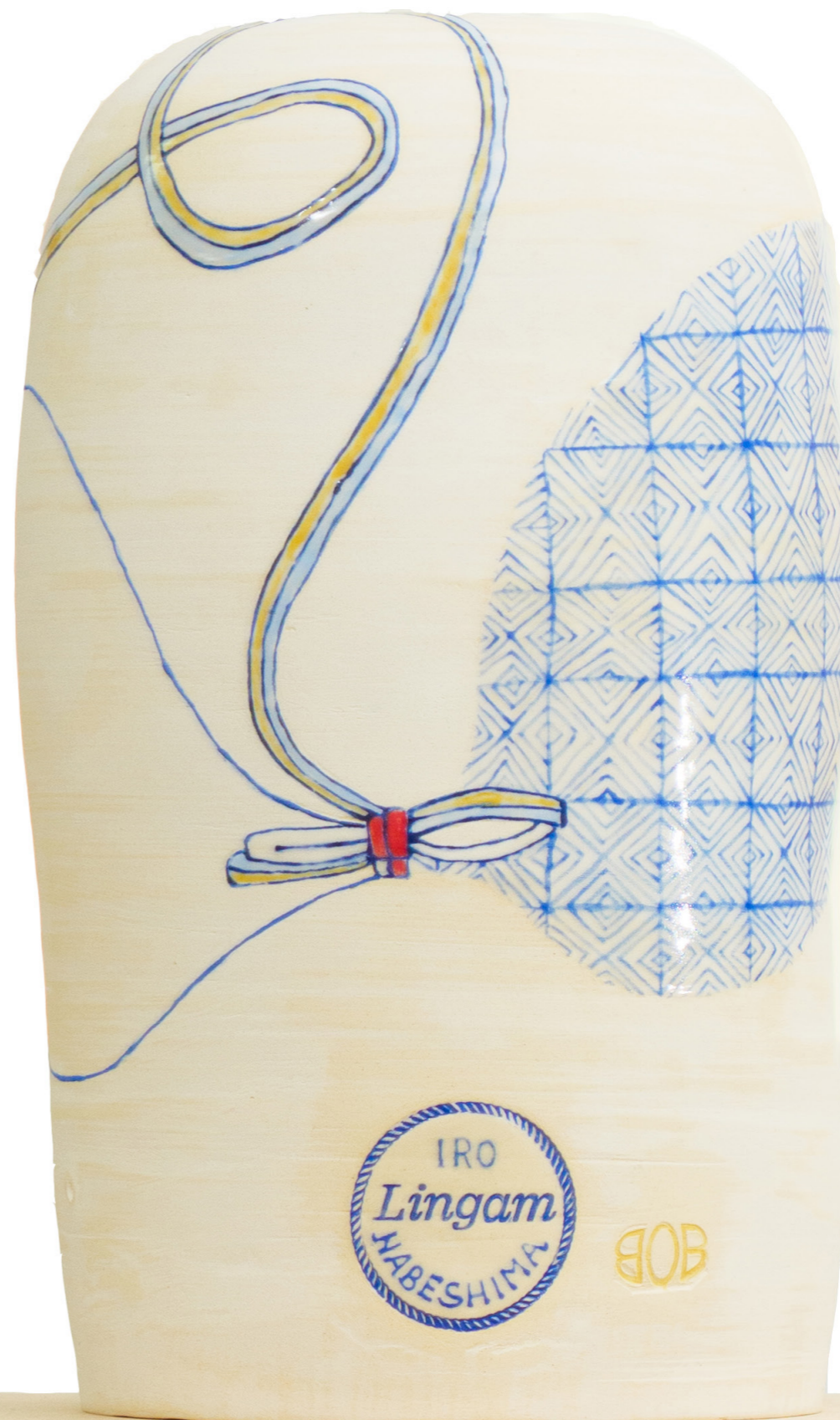
**49. Ghosts and Universes Rattle**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2016



**50. Lingam for Nabeshima**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2023



## 51. "Ed's Tomb"

Nest Magazine n°4 - 1999



My friend Ed Aulerich-Sugai has had AIDS for about six years. He's thinking about buying a niche at the San Francisco Columbarium to house his ashes. I drive him out so we can look the place over. We see its dome floating behind Pier One Imports on Geary Street. A little suburb surrounds the columbarium, and it's not surprising to learn the building was part of the extensive Odd Fellows Cemetery, which became a residential tract in the forties.

The columbarium was designed by the British architect Bernard J.S. Cahill. It's an ornate, steel-framed, neoclassical building that housed the ashes of 6,700 San Franciscans through this century's portion of eternity, including two earthquakes. It was always secular, giving rest to an array of races and ethnicities. Perhaps it served the religion of business, as evidenced by the many Masonic emblems and the august family names on the oldest niches. The building decayed into a magnificent ruin until 1980, when it was bought by the Neptune Society, which has been restoring it since that time.

The niches have increased in value like real estate; a modern annex was installed to meet the demand. The current wave of customers are attracted by the opportunity to control at least one aspect of death by making an intimate statement in a public space. This lovely wedding cake of a building houses the private gestures of the recently departed and the lilies and doves of the long gone.

When Ed and I enter the honeycomb of circular tiers, Ed's final resting place starts spinning around him. He folds up, but catches himself when he feels my hand on the back of his neck. As he sinks onto a folding chair, I brush his clammy temple with my lips.

In Japan, in the seventeenth century, it was fashionable for a cultivated person to write his death poem, intended to be the last syllables the author spoke. Dying, Basho said, "On a journey, ill, /and over withered fields dreams/go wandering still." Last words interest me because death gives them such a grand setting. Moreover, taking words into death turns death into a comedy, because language always has a reversible quality, undermining the finality of death.

Ed and I explore the building. Many of the newer niches at the columbarium have that brand of comedy — the hilarity of last words. Each niche is a tiny room "where dreams go wandering," covered by a glass pane, a stage with theatrical potential on which to assert: this is who I am. The private and public converge. Some people seek the shelter of infancy, teddy bears and toys. Others display their obsessions (collections, baseball, Elvis and his twin, gambling, the perfect martini) in the face of the very death that fueled those obsessions, the very obsessions they used to hide from death.

Ed buys a niche and begins to make his tomb. Later he invites me over to see the tomb before it's installed. It sits on a small drafting table — looking at it makes me weak in the knees. I don't think I have the forward momentum to plan my own tomb: why not just get dumped in the Bay — or *whatever?*

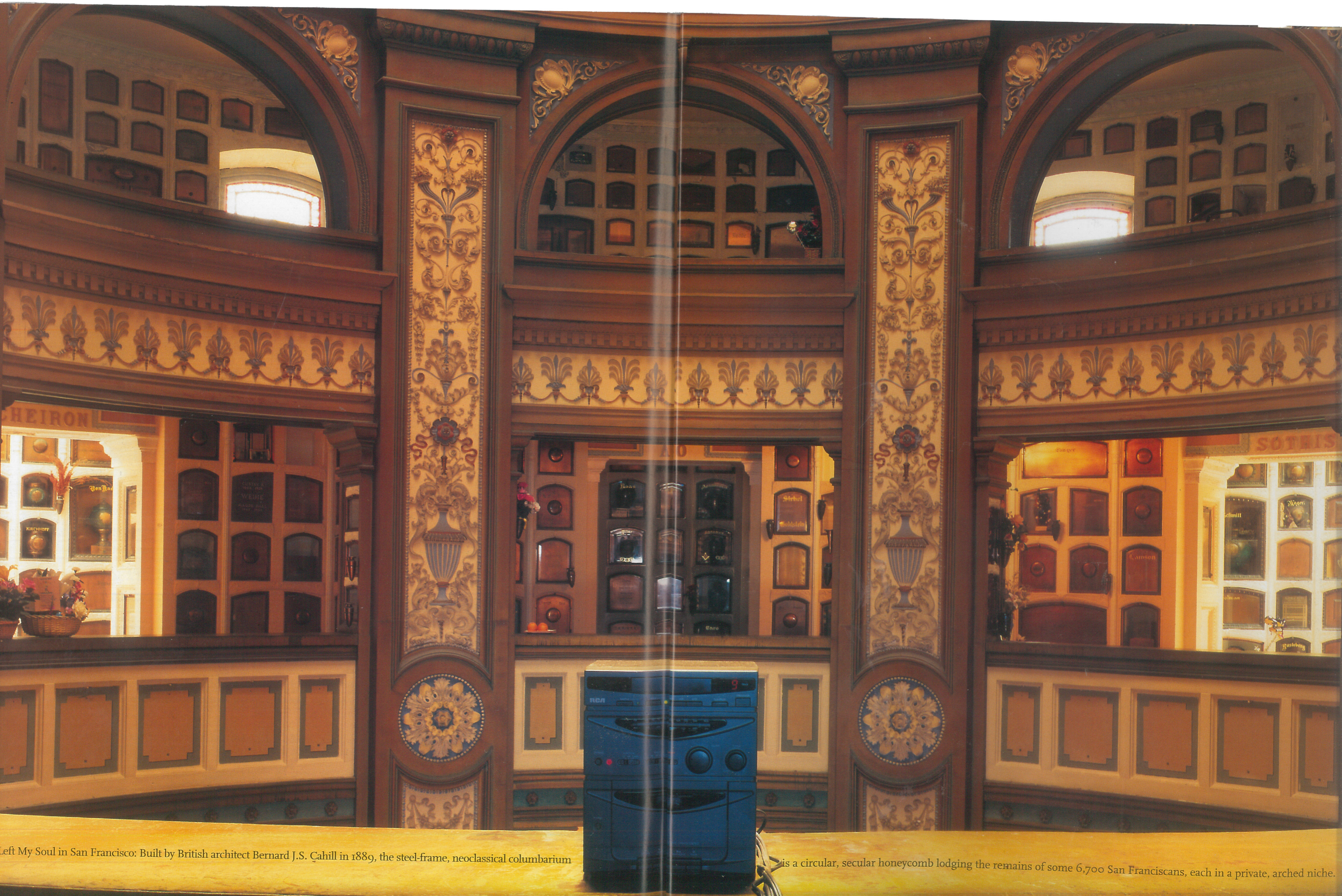
Ed's tomb is a diorama, a ground of polished viridian green marble surrounded by robin's-egg-blue sky across which white clouds with lavender-gray shadows drift. His ashes go in a ceramic vase but he doesn't know how to seal it. I suggest a copper cap that would oxidize into blue-green. The fabricator Michael Brown could do it, I offer.

Ed tells me about the thought that went into the materials — long-lasting pigment, for example, and glue that fixes the canvas to a Plexiglas liner so the cloth will not be in contact with moist cement. I'm dubious about all this. After you are dead, is there a difference between two hundred years and seven hundred years? I think it shows a lack of imagination; Ed still doesn't realize that nothing matters after you are dead, that you are no longer included.

Ed has painted clouds for two decades; still, I think, what does this blue sky say about Ed and his world? I recognize his isolation, a kind of inorganic purity. Long ago, when we were hippie lovers on acid, I hallucinated that the universe was fucking itself, while Ed sat cross-legged, watching crystals endlessly unfold on a white wall. Ed's niche says that now nothing stands between Ed and the sky. Maybe it's a wish. Perhaps Ed's tomb is the ideal landscape that his ashes, if scattered, might become part of.

The restraint of Ed's installation interests me, a heaven characterized by lack of detail. My heaven would contain even less — as though there is nothing to pass on, nothing to propose and no forum to say it in. Experience itself is so threadbare that sky effects are the only assertion we make with confidence. Memorial art supposedly looks backward — old gardens and weathered cenotaphs — but it actually looks ahead and believes in continuity with the future and in the value of the world to come. The idea that a future exists startles me and reorients me to the present. The recognition of a future is the beginning of a kind of sanity and responsibility — we are invited to link our lives to experience beyond ourselves. That is a powerful optimism, an enormously strong idea. Ed has an idea, however sketchy, of the whole.

Ed takes up residence in his tomb — I go out to have a look. I see that Daniel, Ed's lover, added a photo of Ed to the niche, supplying a human scale that Ed had ruled out. Now my assessment of Ed's tomb becomes more acute and my conclusions become irreversible; Ed asked me to join him in his niche after I die. Will I share eternity with Sofie, Ed's cat, who is scheduled to move in when she shuffles off this mortal coil, and Daniel? Then why not invite our dear friend Elin, my lover Chris, and Denny, too? And I wish you — the reader of this story — could accompany us in Ed's small exhibition space, in his work about death and the future.

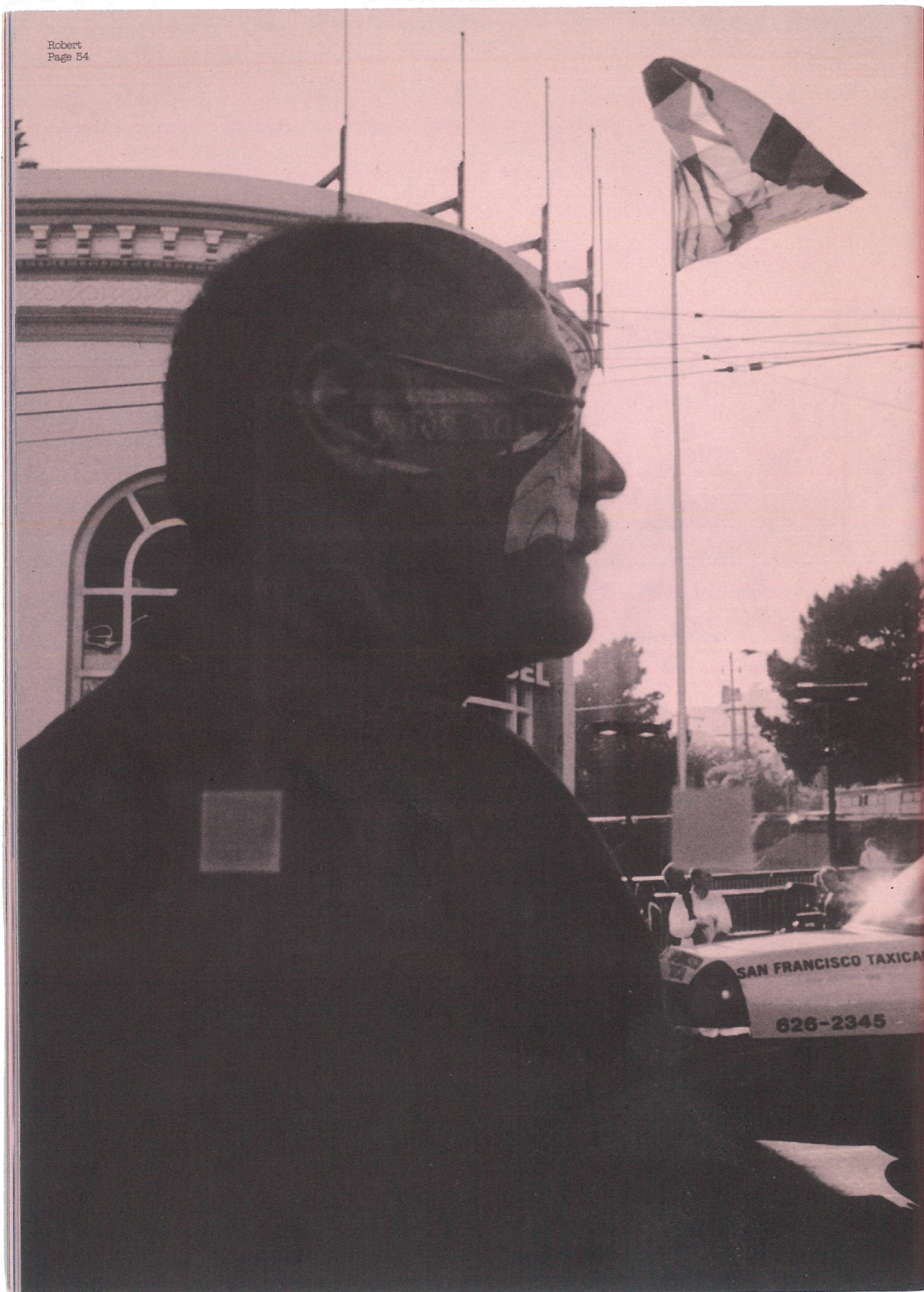


Left My Soul in San Francisco: Built by British architect Bernard J.S. Cahill in 1889, the steel-frame, neoclassical columbarium

is a circular, secular honeycomb lodging the remains of some 6,700 San Franciscans, each in a private, arched niche.

## 52. "Robert Glück homosexual writer of books loves cocks and cooking"

in *Butt Magazine* n°11 - 2004



Robert  
Page 54

Robert  
Page 55

# ROBERT GLÜCK HOMOSEXUAL WRITER OF BOOKS LOVES COCKS AND COOKING

Interview by Danny Calvi  
Portraits by Dino Dinco

It has been several years since I sat in Robert Glück's experimental writing workshop when he was my professor at university back in California. Meeting up with him again, this time in Paris, fills me with the promise of titillating anecdotes and literary gossip. With a copy of Foucault's *Paris* in one hand and a map of Paris in the other, I'm determined to guide us to the famous French theorist's favorite ice cream parlor. Robert Glück is on a book tour of Paris, London and Amsterdam to read from his new collection of short stories, *Denny Smith*. At the ice cream parlor, the proprietor tells us that Foucault often stopped here for ice cream on warm summer days after having spent hours in the humid library. His favorite flavors were pecan and banana.

Danny: Do you inject aspects of your real life into your fiction?

Robert: Well, it's all autobiography. Even if the story's not about me on the surface, it's some version of autobiography.

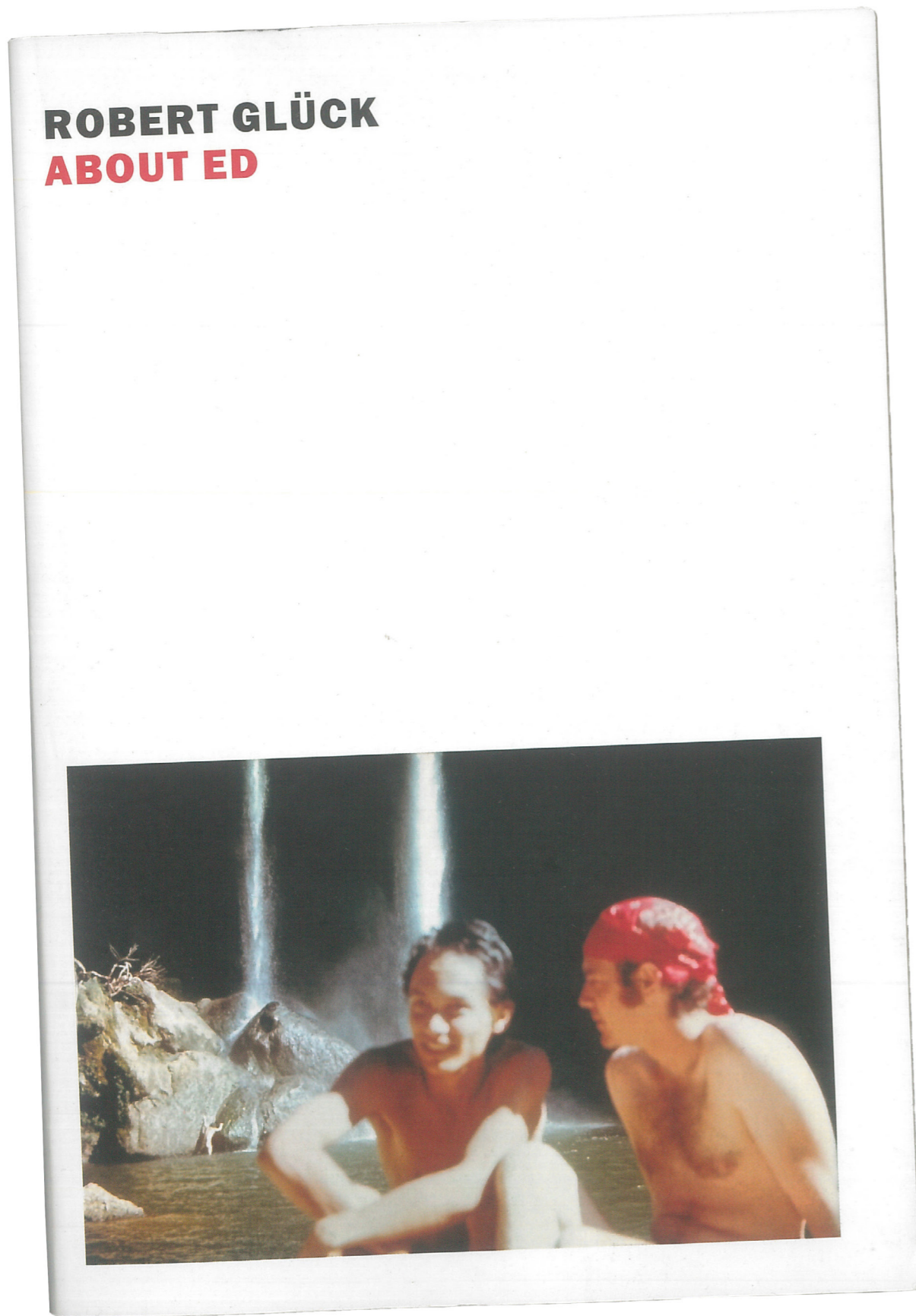
So you make nothing up.

That's accurate. A lot of my plots are simply borrowed. I'm often trying to find a story that can operate as the story for my own feelings. For instance, the father of a friend of mine was murdered in a very violent murder that took place all over the

father's house. From room to room, there were bits of his father. He was really murdered, not just like shot, but really banged up and dismantled. However, his family life had been very nailed down. The whole family took their cue from their father and lived a very tamped-down life without much story. They didn't get excited. They were calm, somewhat depressed. But after his death, it came out that the father had several other lives – not one, but many. He had been acquainted with other people my friend's age, who he was better friends with

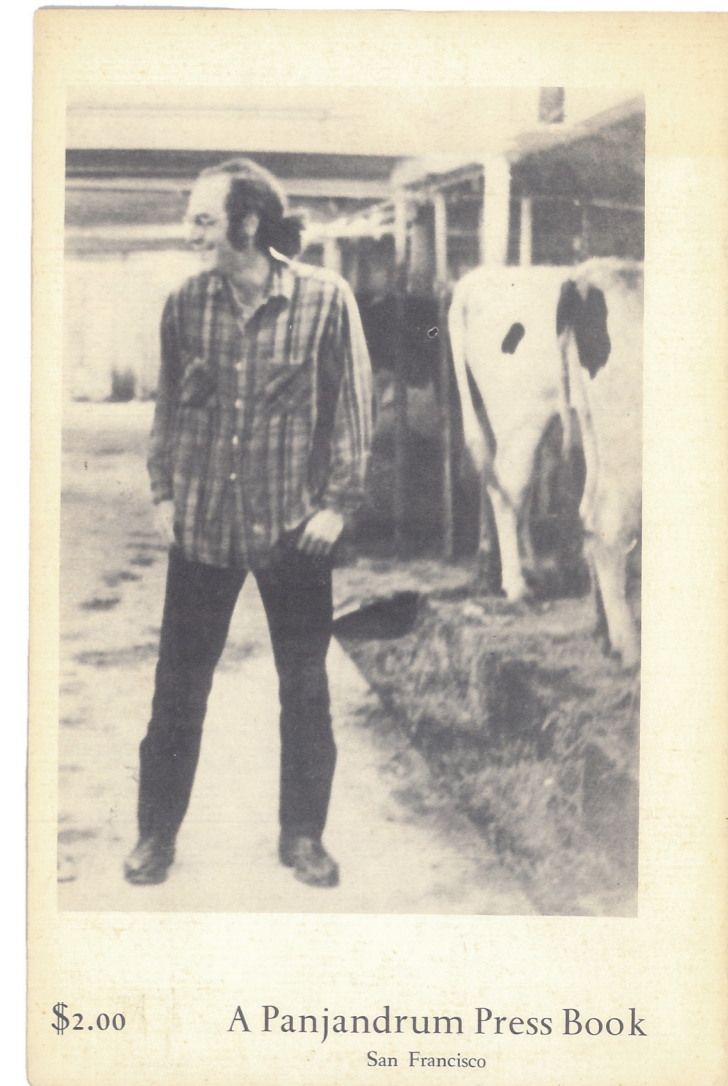
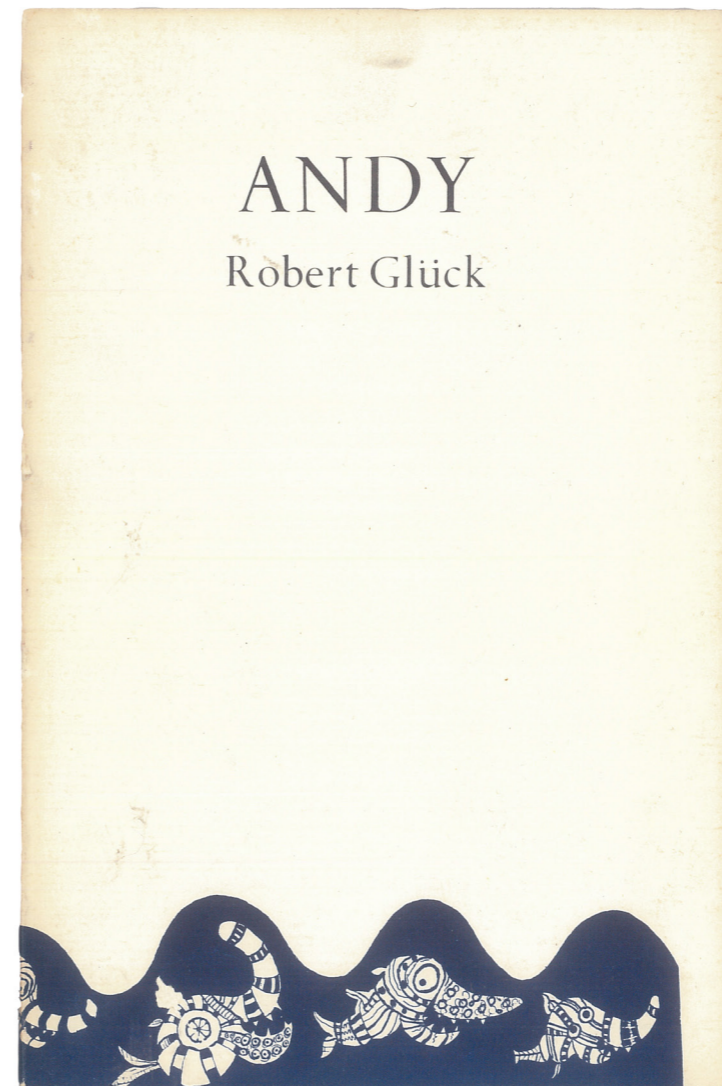
**53. About Ed**

New York Review Books - 2023



**54. Andy**

Panjandrum Press - 1973



**55. Metaphysics**

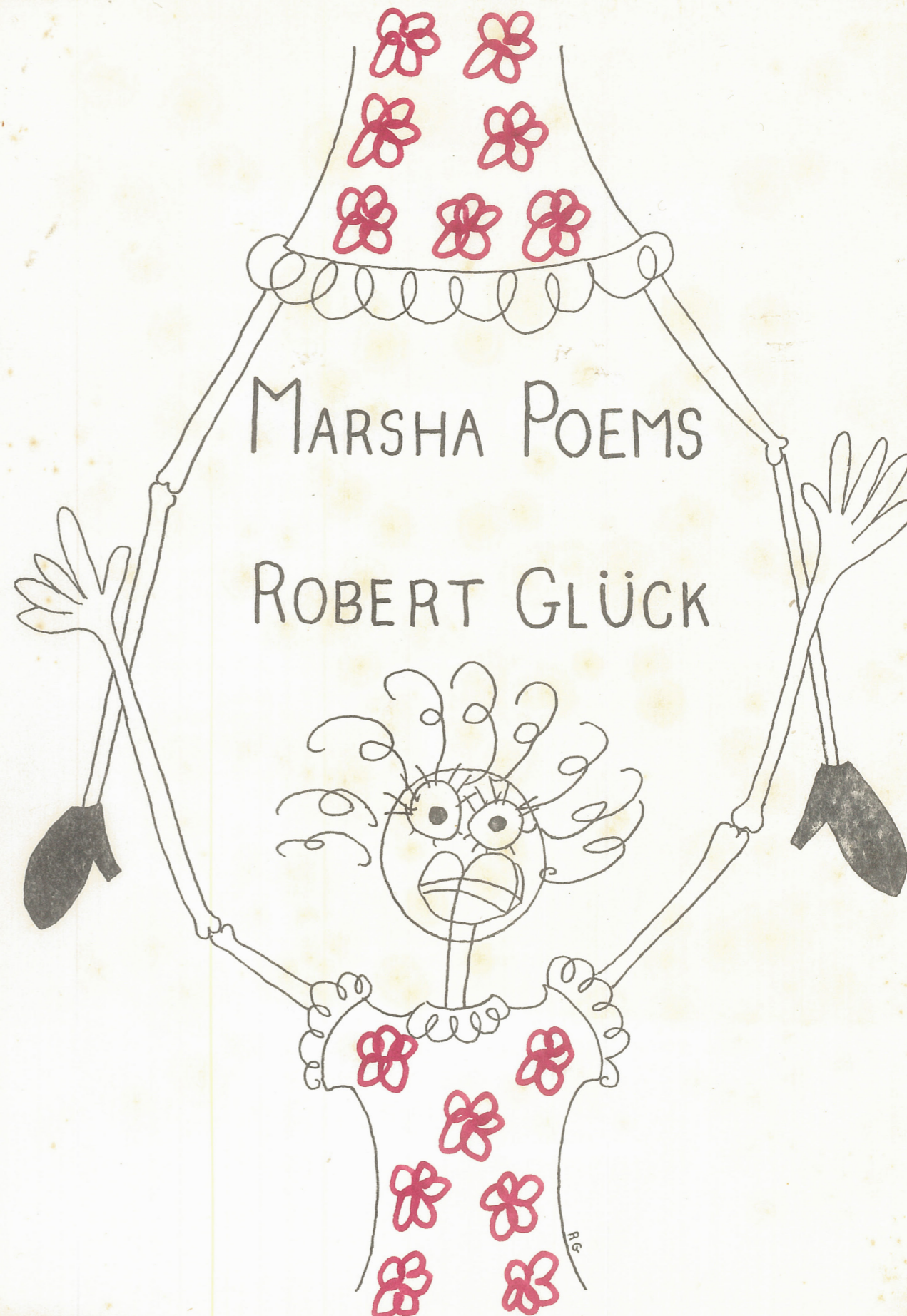
Hoddypoll Press - 1977

**META  
PHYS  
ICS**

*Robert Glück.*

**56. Marsha Poems**

Hoddypoll Press - 1973





**57. Genie Bottle**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2019



**58. Readings in the 90's**

\* A Benefit Reading for Chinese Writers In Exile - 1990

中國流亡作家聯盟

A Benefit Reading for  
**CHINESE WRITERS IN EXILE**

with

**ROBERT GLUCK**  
**MICHAEL PALMER**  
**LESLIE SCALAPINO**

(Bay Area Poets)

**FEI YE**

(an exiled Chinese Poet)

**Sunday • April 22, 1990 • 7:30 P.M.**

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Requested Donation: \$6.00

**Chinese Writers in Exile** was founded on October 6, 1989, in response to the tragic events in China this spring; currently it has members in eight countries on three continents. The organization aims to further the cause of Chinese democracy through literature.

The goals of **Chinese Writers in Exile** are to: Publish a literary magazine, "Exile;" support and rescue writers who have been persecuted, arrested, and jailed on the Chinese mainland; publish the works of mainland Chinese and overseas Chinese writers; deliver publications into the Chinese mainland through various channels; promote exchange between Chinese writers and writers of other countries and establish formal ties with international writers' organizations; and, translate and present outstanding works of literature by writers from China and other countries.

For more information about **Chinese Writers in Exile**, call 524-7317.

\* Queer Beats: A Symposium - 1996

# QUEER BEATS:

## A SYMPOSIUM

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10:30 AM - 4:30 PM

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A Harvey Milk Institute-sponsored symposium entitled Queer Beats will be held in conjunction with the de Young Museum exhibition "Beat Culture and the New America 1950-1965." This is the first conference dedicated to exploring the relationship between (homo)sexuality and Beat aesthetics. In a series of panel discussions and readings, academic experts and Beat poets as well as painters will address a range of writers and topics from Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs to Beat identity, sexuality, feminism, censorship, degeneracy, scatology and the aesthetic of scuzziness.

### PANELS

BEAT EROTICS, 10:30-12:30

Moderator: Aaron Shurin  
Earl Jackson, Jr., Lenore Kandel, Steve Silberman, Bruce X

QUEER IDENTITY, 1:30-3:00

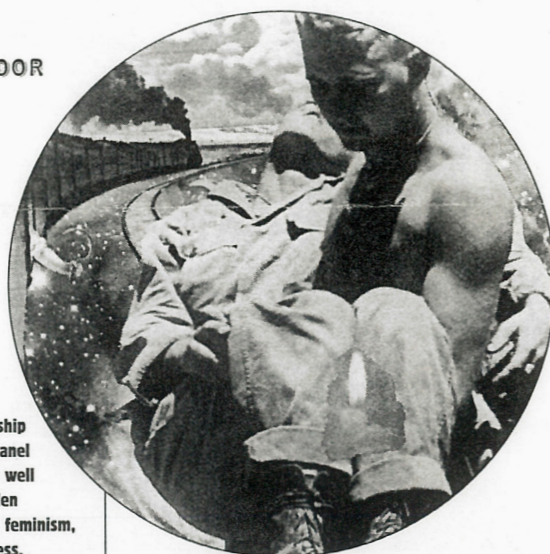
Moderator: Kevin Killian  
Michael Davidson, Ricardo Ortiz, Mark Ewert

BEAT CIRCLES, 3:00-4:30

Moderator: Robert Glück  
Scott Watson, Harold Norse, Maria Damon

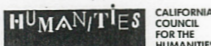
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"EMBLEMS FOR ROBERT DUNCAN"

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This project is made possible in part by a grant from the California Council for the Humanities, a State program of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

FOR REGISTRATION AND

MORE INFORMATION

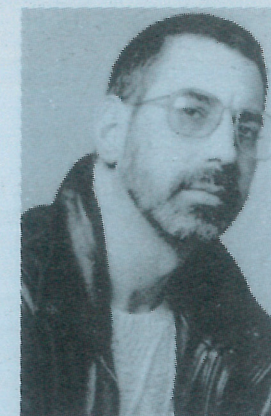
CONTACT KEVIN SCHAUB AT:



584 Castro Street #451  
San Francisco, CA 94114  
ph: 415/552-7200  
fax: 415/863-4740

\* Just Buffalo Literary Center with Kathy Acker - 1995

*Just*

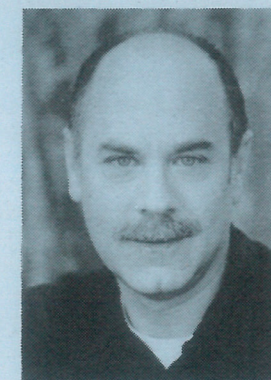


**TED PEARSON**  
and **TOM RAWORTH**  
Tuesday, April 4, 1995  
7 p.m. at Hallwalls

*Buffalo*



*Literary*



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*1975-1995*

*The National Literary Network Tour  
presents:*

**KATHY ACKER &  
ROBERT GLÜCK**  
Tuesday, April 18, 1995  
7:00 p.m. at Hallwalls

*APRIL 1995*

# New to age

A series on gay mid-life edited by Robert Glück

ately, my middle-aged homo friends feel a general bafflement about our age group, a sense of displacement in the gay community, and a lack of presence in the gay media. One friend joked about going back in the closet where at least he could control his own invisibility. So I asked the B.A.R. to let me edit a series of monthly columns addressing the subject of being gay and middle-aged. I have lots of questions, and I've brought this column into existence to supply some answers. I'm going to invite a variety of men and women to

contribute. It's an exploration, nothing definitive. I don't know what will turn up, but I expect to learn something about myself.

"The old are new to age as the young are new to youth," San Francisco poet George Oppen once wrote. That is, getting older is always a new problem. Part of my own problem is that I have little in my past to tell me how to age. There's less if I look to the mainstream, and still less in the gaystream.

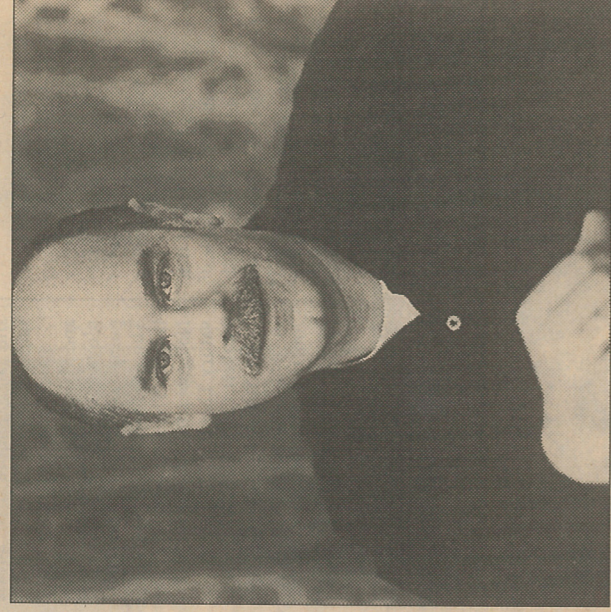
Are there seasons in every person's life? If so, how can I recog-

nize and become them in a way that is lively and meaningful? I'm 50: am I in late summer? — early fall? I can't grow old as my parents and grandparents did — that generation gap is still in place. So I have to invent a way to be old. My parents lived in a culture that was separate from the young, and I am not ready for that. Besides, there no longer is a culture separate from the young. The young and I listen to the same music more or less, buy our jeans from the same stores, watch the same films, and when I hear the radio of a convertible Chevy packed with today's youth emitting T-Rex, I know their generation gap has not yet snapped, though the years may be piling up.

In the '60s and '70s I used my generation gap as a self-defining border; the story of the times was the story of my peer group of fags, hippies, activists, and bohemians. I still have a peer group — is the story of the times ours? I doubt it, because we are not members of any group in the same way that young people are. Perhaps this is one difference between the young and the middle-aged.

What difference? When I was young, I looked for recognition with great urgency: I needed to know who I was, and I needed to tell people about it. I remember the intensity (fueled by gallons of coffee) of delivering my whole self up in talk to my friends. Now it's more complicated, and I would say my friendships with my peers are informed by the sweetness of knowing that most of our experience can't be put into words, that little is visible above the surface.

There's the pride, shame, and luck in growing old. When I look in the mirror, instead of fierce identification, I only partly recognize myself. My face is not absolutely committed to the present. I see remnants of my past, and the past can seem irrelevant. This is painful to write. I see the new thing, age, which is depriving me of physical beauty. To find beauty in an aging face, first we would have to find relevance in the past. Instead, our (American, gay) culture is youth-oriented. Oddly, I helped make that culture. It is shameful to grow older. The culture tells me that somehow I really should be young forever, and aging is simply a tactical mistake that I have made. Sometimes I turn away from my own body with lack of forgiveness.



Robert Glück

In a movie review on one of the gay pages, the critic praised a film for portraying an intergenerational couple — one man was friends about that one. We groaned together — and my boyfriend, Chris Komater, an artist who is nineteen years younger than I and a film buff, recalled that Humphrey Bogart romanced Lauren Bacall. Cary Grant romanced Sophia Loren, and Fred Astaire romanced Judy Garland, without the intergenerational specter. What about Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy? What happened to change things? Has the generation gap snapped after all?

According to the personals it has. At 50, I have fallen off the map of sexual viability. I can no longer be just a guy. If I want to join the party, I have to join it as a sexual type. Should I become a dizzy daddy? A leather top? Yet I have never been happier sexually, and my years past 40 have been romantically busy. My informal poll tells me this is true of many gay men and women (though other such polls may yield the opposite results). So what is that about? That I was more fucked-up when I was young? Well, yes, though any day I'd trade the neutron bomb of my mid-life crisis for the alienation of my younger self. If we are such babes, why doesn't the gay media tell us so?

On the other hand, if the community hasn't provided us with selves that mature, we owe it endless thanks for providing us with men and women to sleep with and to love.

Every so often, while making love with Chris, I imagine that we are in a bathhouse or sex hotel, and that men are lounging around outside our door, watching us, and finding it interesting that a 31-one-year-old is tucking a 50-year-old and vice versa. I suppose that little crowd is the gay community, and in some way our sex and our lives belong to it, although of course our lives are also entirely our own. When Chris and I are in a position that separates us — say he is standing behind me — I think, a young man is fucking an old man, but when we are tangled up together, it's just Chris and Bob merging in a sweet blob. Is that what heterosexuals feel? Different when separate, same when skin to skin?

Am I sugar-coating the pill of aging? I should add that my body is starting to collect ailments that will be mine till I die. My memory sometimes falters and so does my stamina. I could have predicted that. But there are also pleasant surprises: no one told me that as I shattering — is there less to shatter? The break in consciousness is longer and it takes me longer to recover. Now the connection between sex and death is less mental. I'm still in bed wondering where my arms and legs are located while Chris is bouncing down the hall.

Generation gap, intergenerational couples, sore knees, organic demolition: that's a good place to stop for now. Next month writer Eileen Myles will tell us what mid-life means to her. ▽

Robert Glück is the author of eight books, most recently *Jack the Modernist* (a reprint) and *Margery Kempe*. His stories appeared in the *Best American Gay Fiction 1996*, *Best American Erotica of 1996*, *The Men on Men Anthologies*, and *The Faber Book of Gay Short Fiction*. In 1994, the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* named Glück one of the ten best postmodern writers in North America.

## TABLE FOR SIX INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS

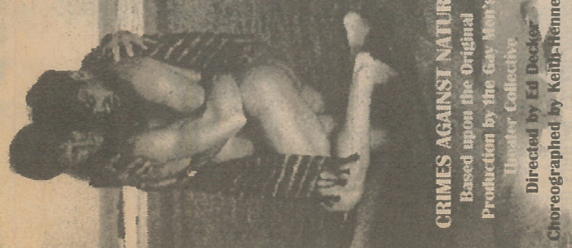
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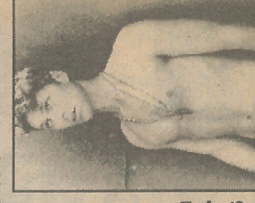
Executive Director Ed Decker



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by Tim Miller  
Previews Nov. 6

meet William Warmack, author of  
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Communal Nude Robert Gluck

**60 - 63. Genie Bottles**

Emily and Roger



**60. Genie Bottle (Emily)**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2023



**61. Genie Bottle (Roger)**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2023



**62. Genie Bottle (Roger)**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2023



**63. Genie Bottle (Emily)**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2023



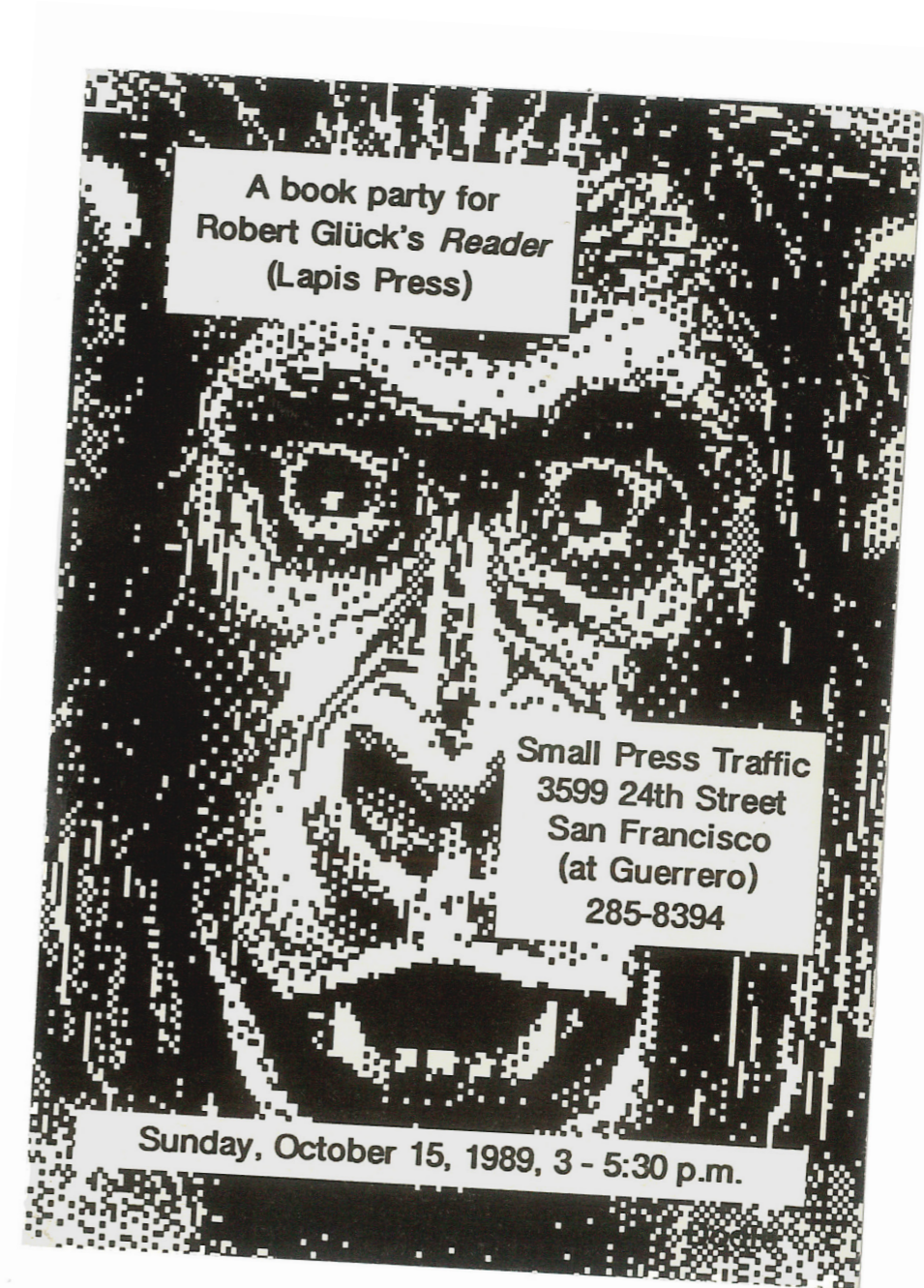
**64. Bottom's Up! - The Catalog**

Exhibition and catalog curated by Chris Komater and Robert Glück for the Lab Gallery in San Francisco - June 1998



**65. A Book party for Robert Glück's Reader**

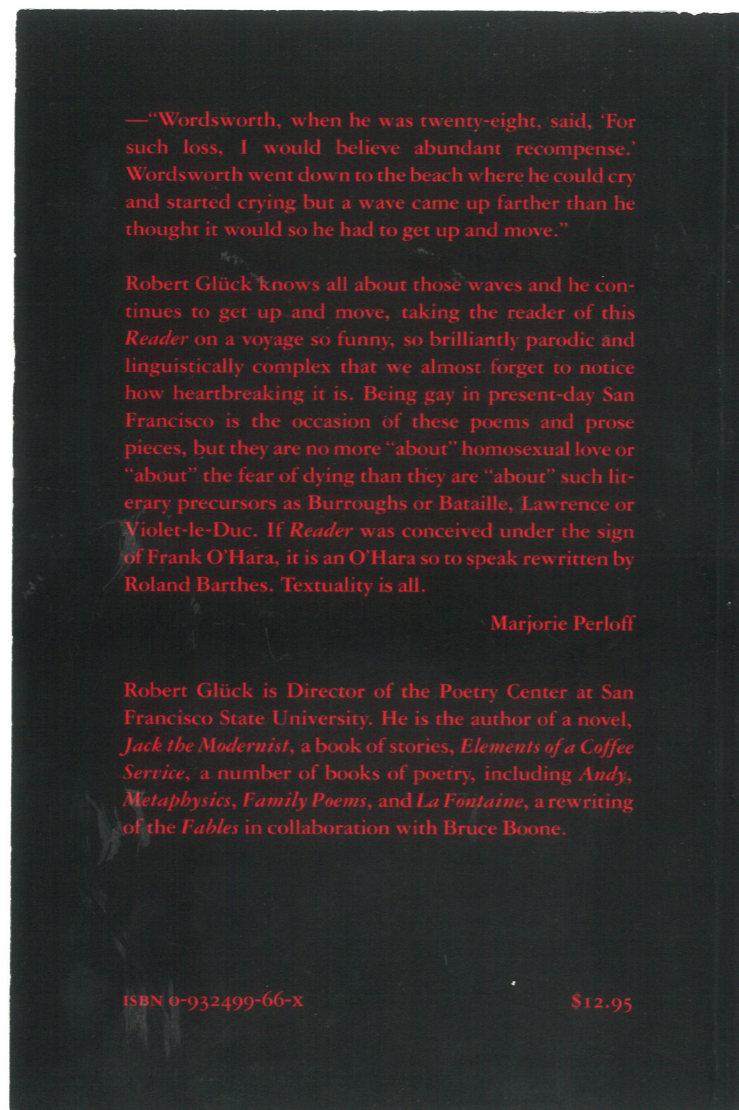
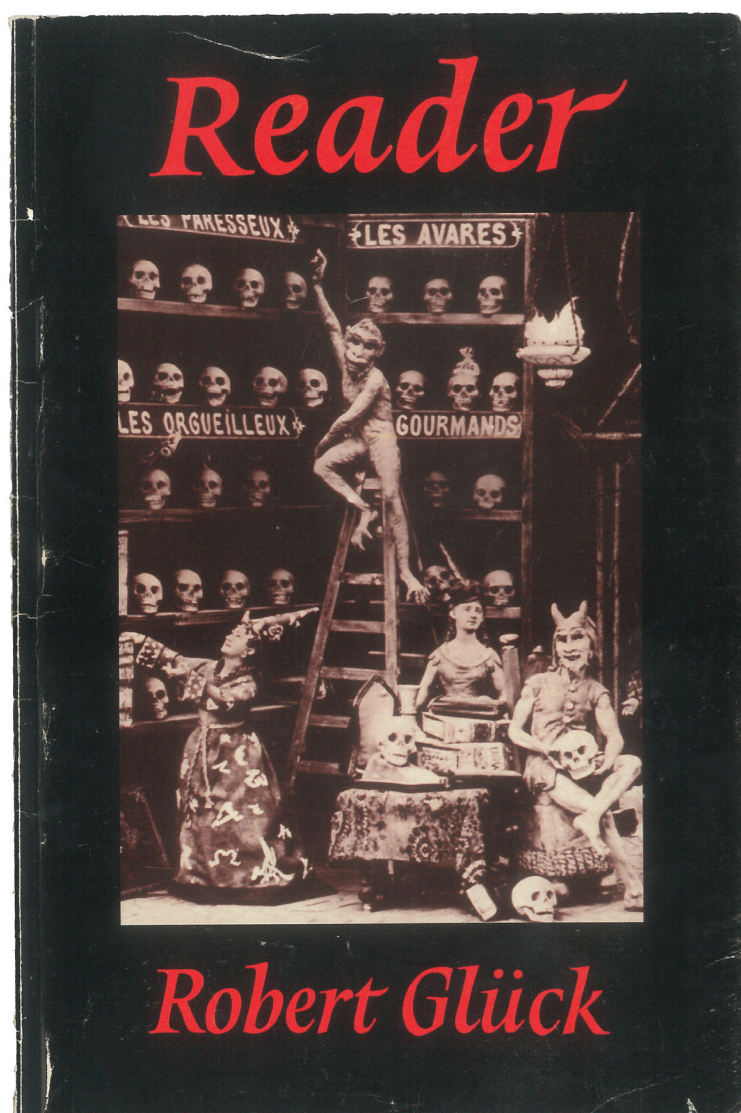
Flyer - at Small Press Traffic - San Francisco - 1989





## 66. Reader

Lapis Press - 1989

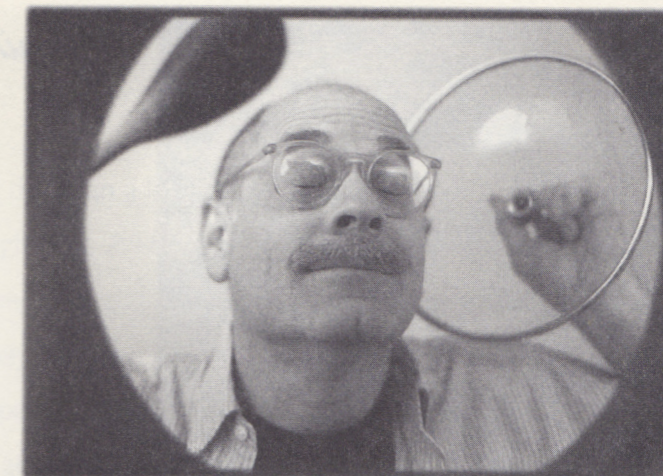


**R.G:** The artist Sam Francis invited me to be an associate editor at his Lapis Press. They published this book of poems in 1989.

## 67. Robert Glück's mom Noodle Kugel recipe

in *Food for Life: ... And Other Dish*, edited by Lawrence Schimel - 1996

Robert Glück



*My mother's old-fashioned Jewish pudding is good for brunch, lunch, on a buffet, as a side dish with chicken or (heaven forfend) pork—that is, with light meats. It always disappears, even though, or because, it's not very fashionable.*

### Noodle Kugel

1 pound medium egg noodles,  
cooked and lightly drained  
1 cube butter  
½ cup sugar  
1 cup fresh bread crumbs  
1 medium-sized can crushed  
pineapple with juice  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
6 eggs  
¼ cup brown sugar  
½ cup granola

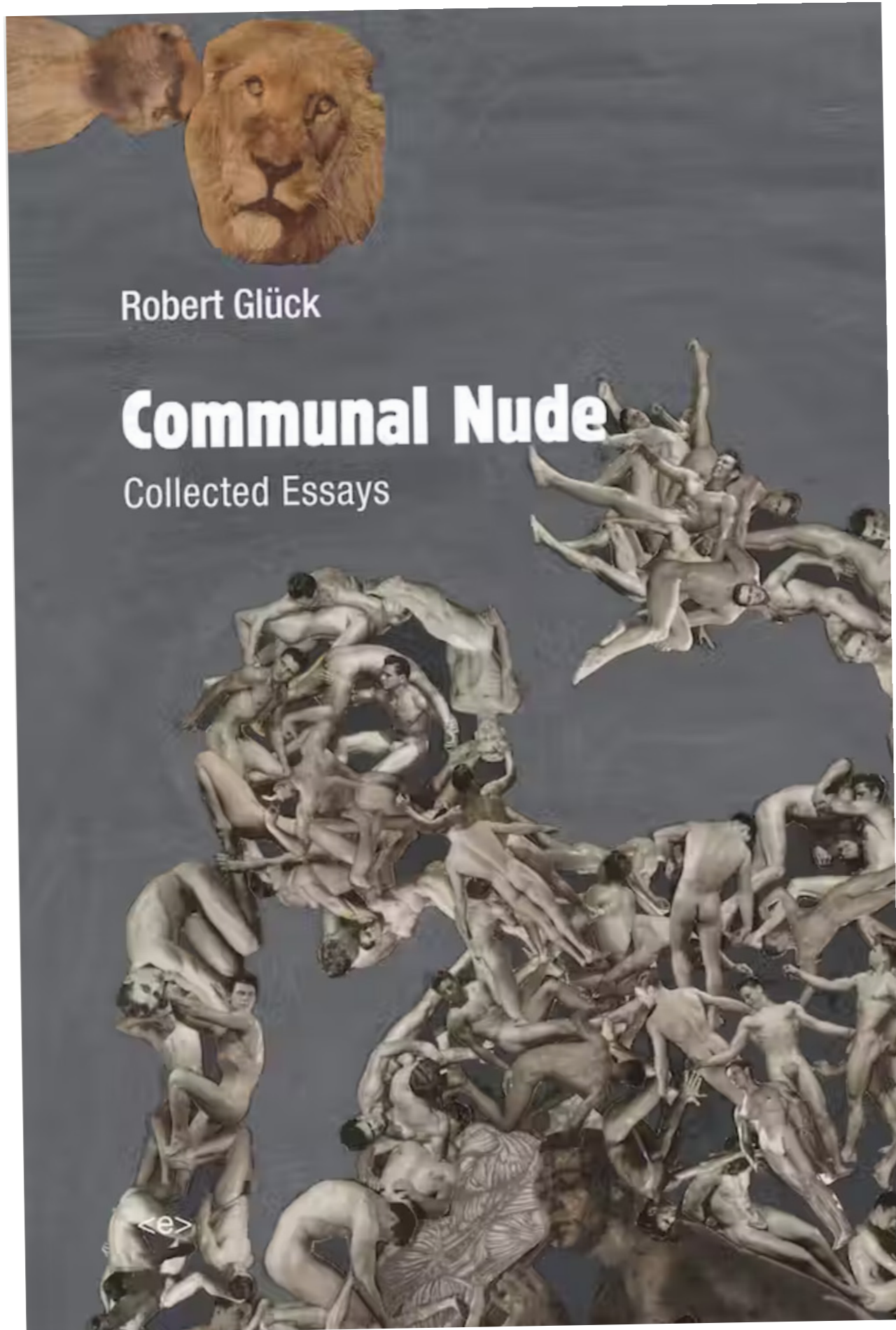
Mix the noodles, butter, sugar, bread crumbs, pineapple, vanilla and eggs. Place the noodle mixture in a shallow pan. Mix the brown sugar and granola, and spread it over the noodles. Bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees. When it's cool, cut into brownie-sized squares. Serve this warm or cold.

You can make an unusually savory pasta by altering the ingredients (but not the proportions). For example, use chicken stock, smoked chicken, and caramelized onions, instead of pineapple and juice, sugar, and topping.

**ROBERT GLÜCK'S** books include the novels *Margery Kemp* and *Jack the Modernist*, the story collection *Elements of a Coffee Service*, and a number of books of poetry. His work appears in *The Faber Book of Gay Short Fiction*, *Best American Erotica 1995*, and elsewhere. He lives with Chris Komater, "high on a hill" in San Francisco.

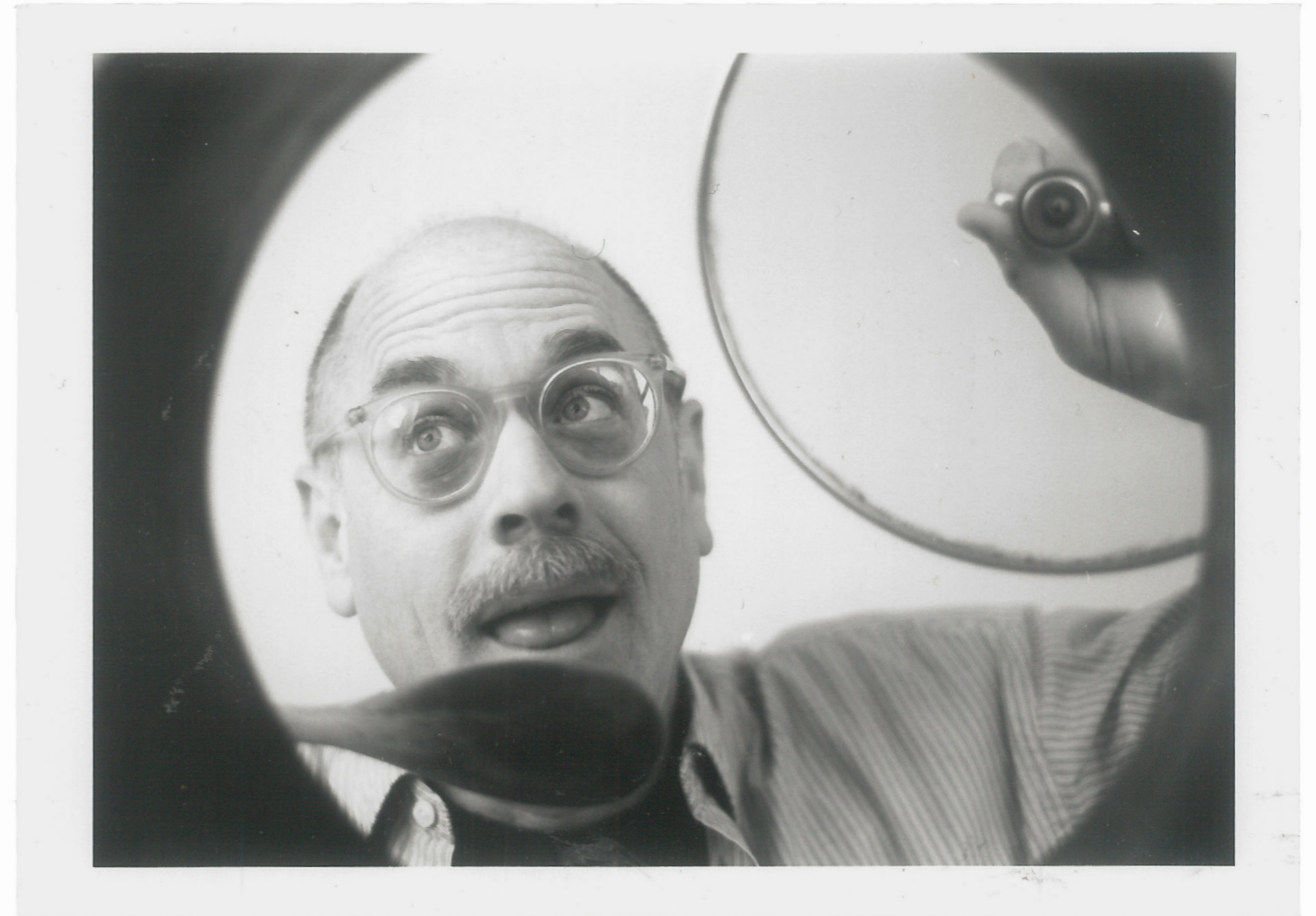
**68. Communal Nude - Collected Essays**

Semiotext(e) - 2016

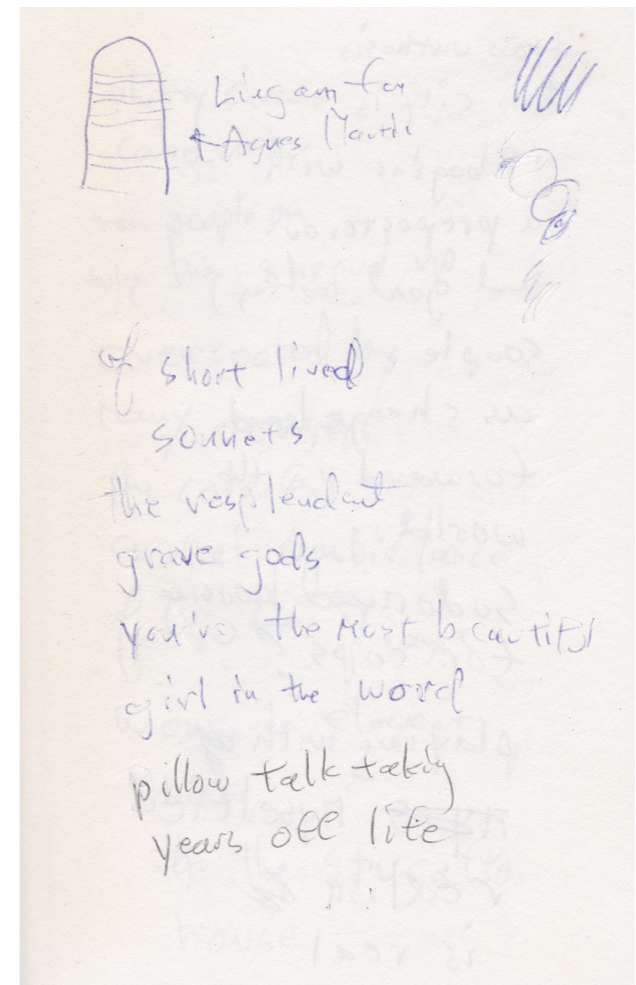
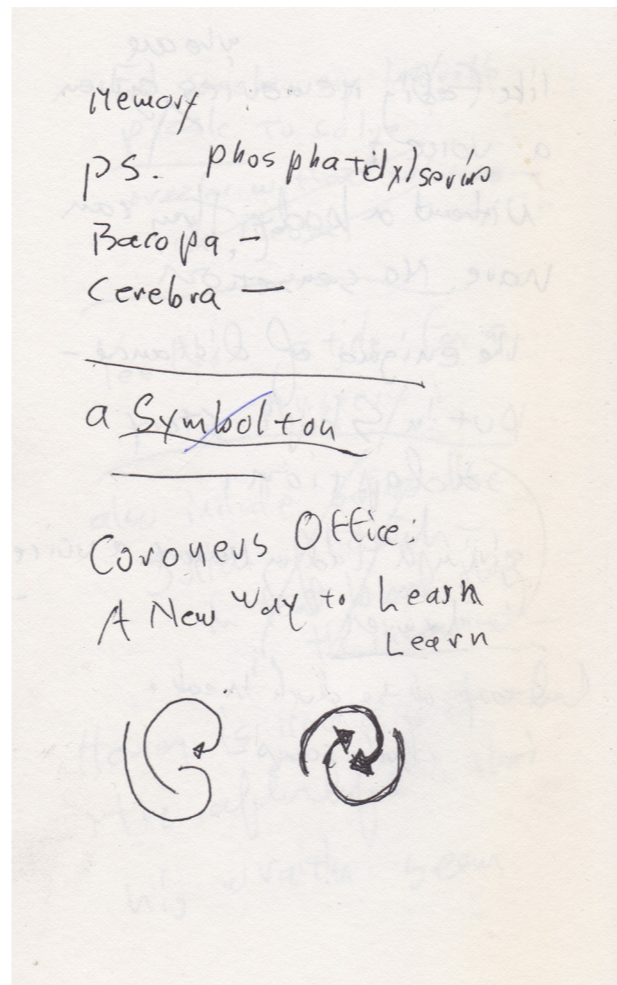
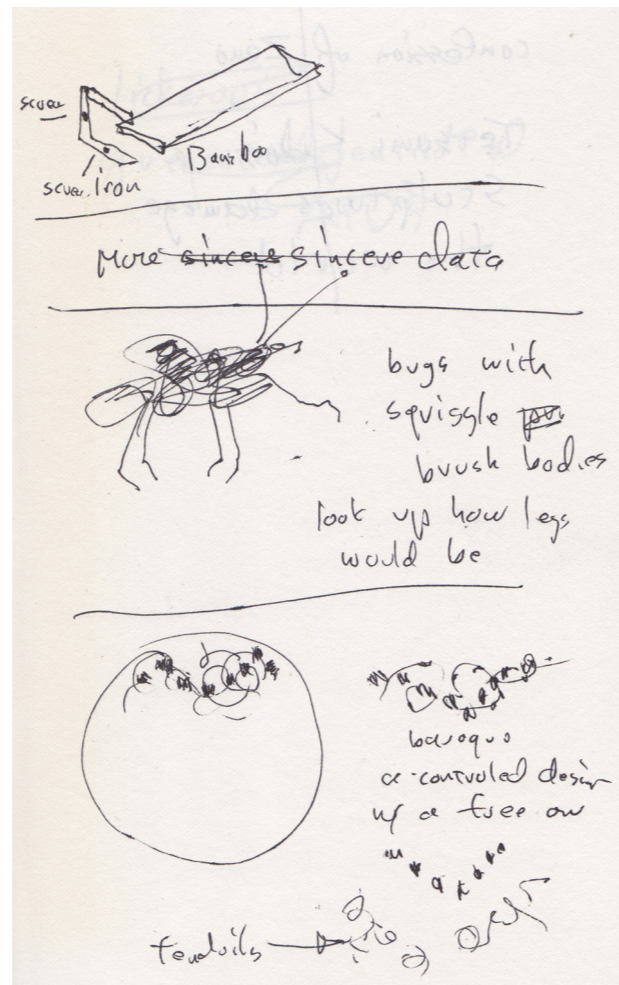
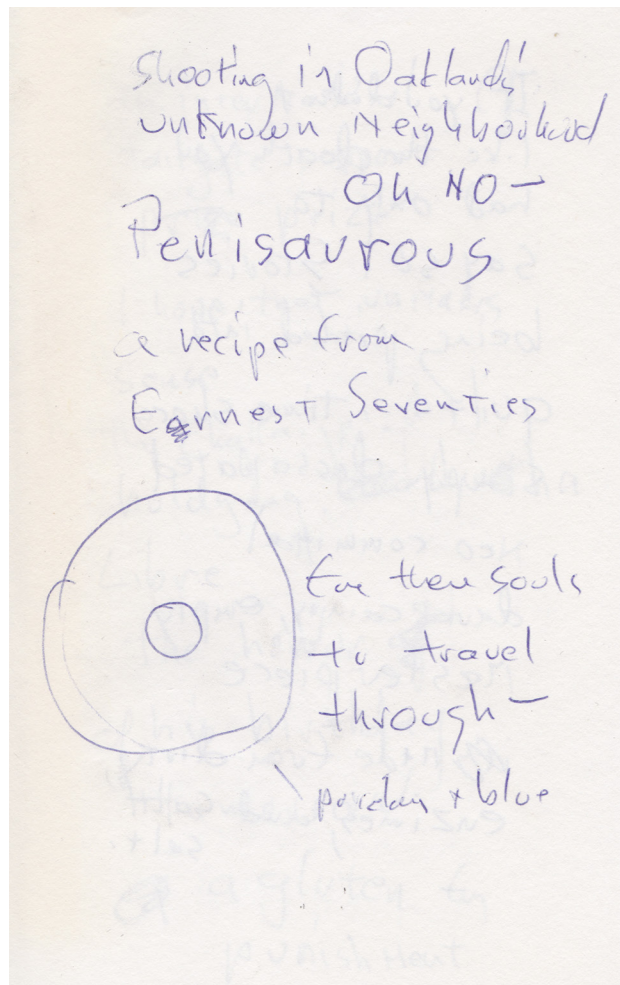
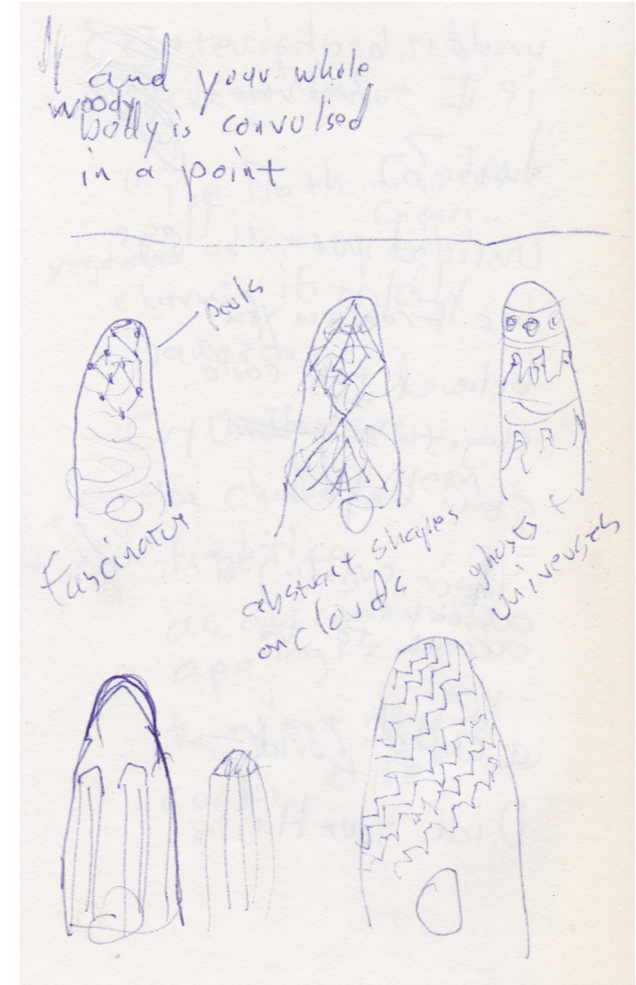
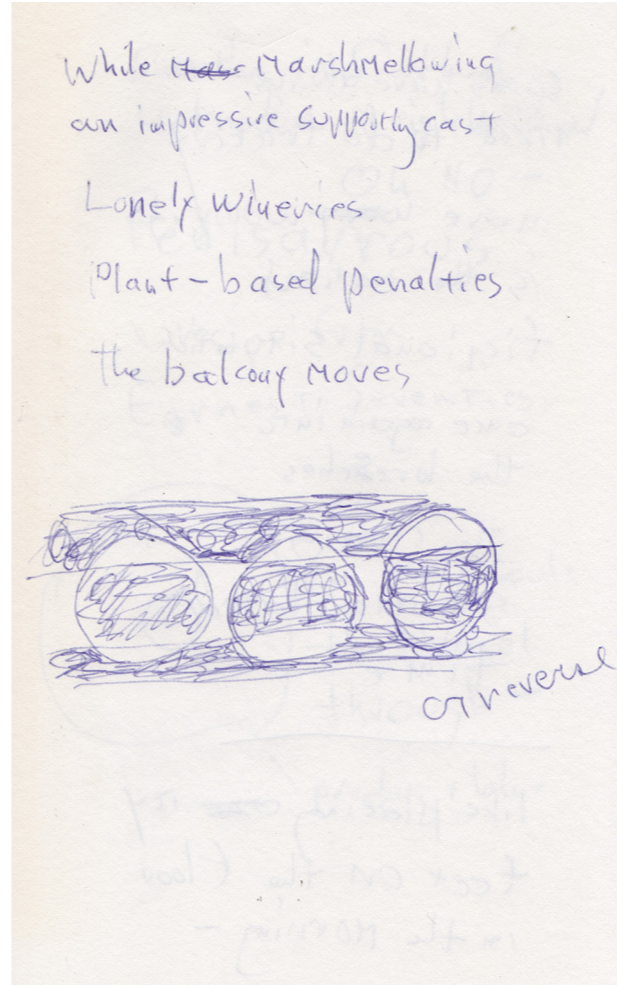
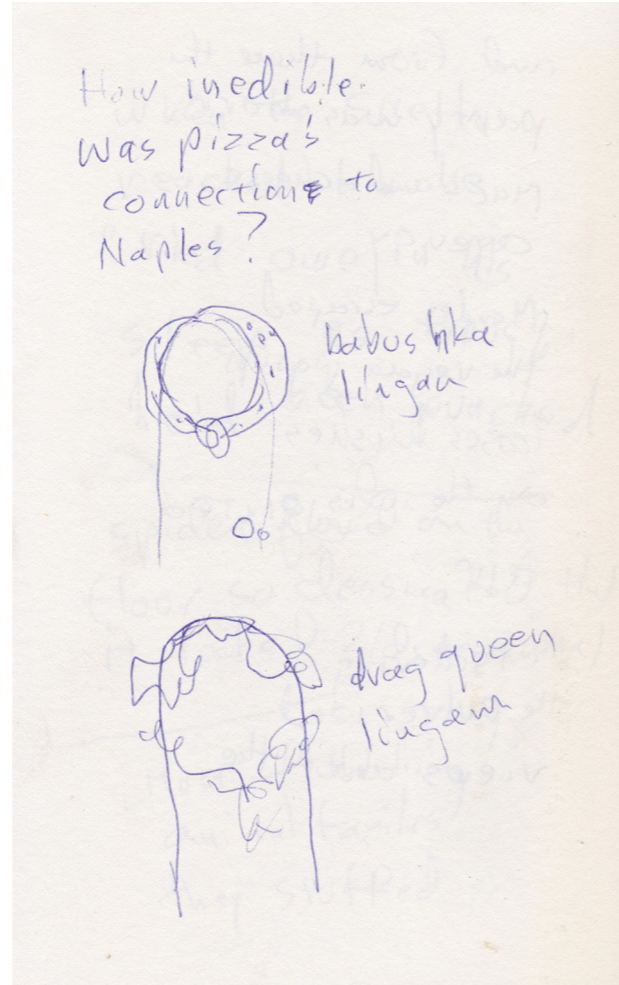
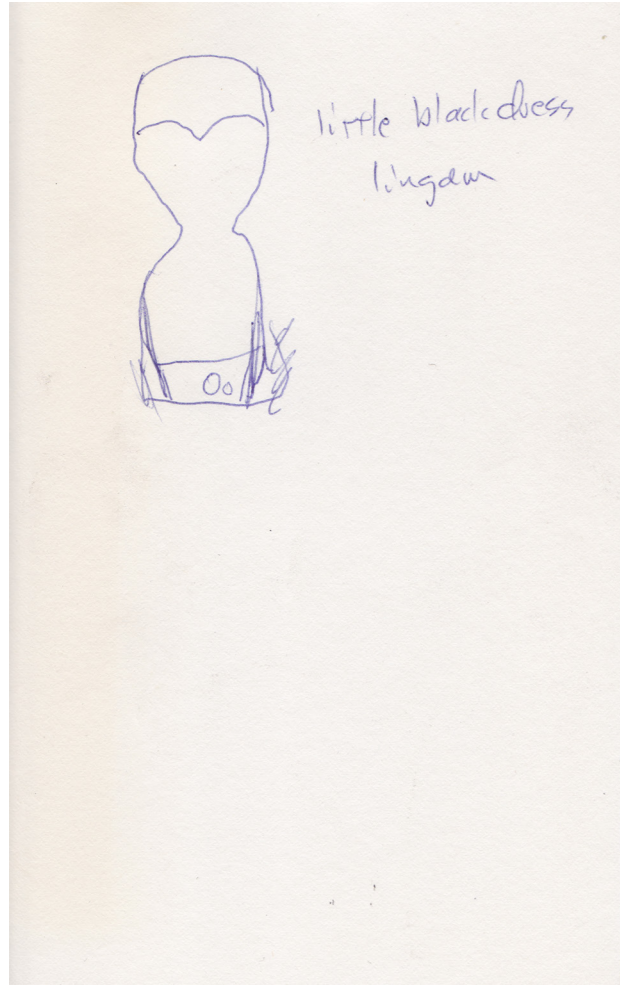


**69. Photograph by Chris Komater**

1996

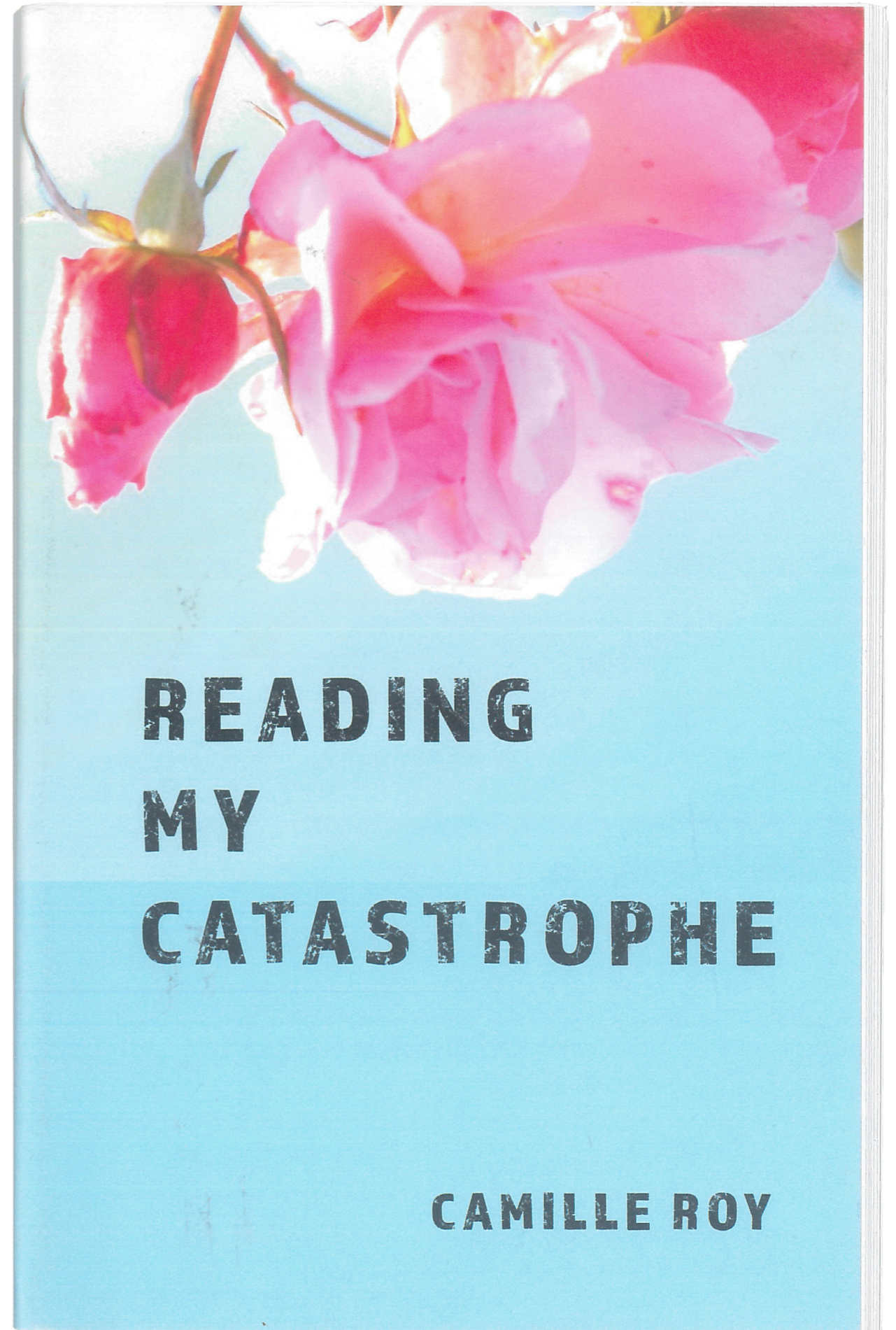
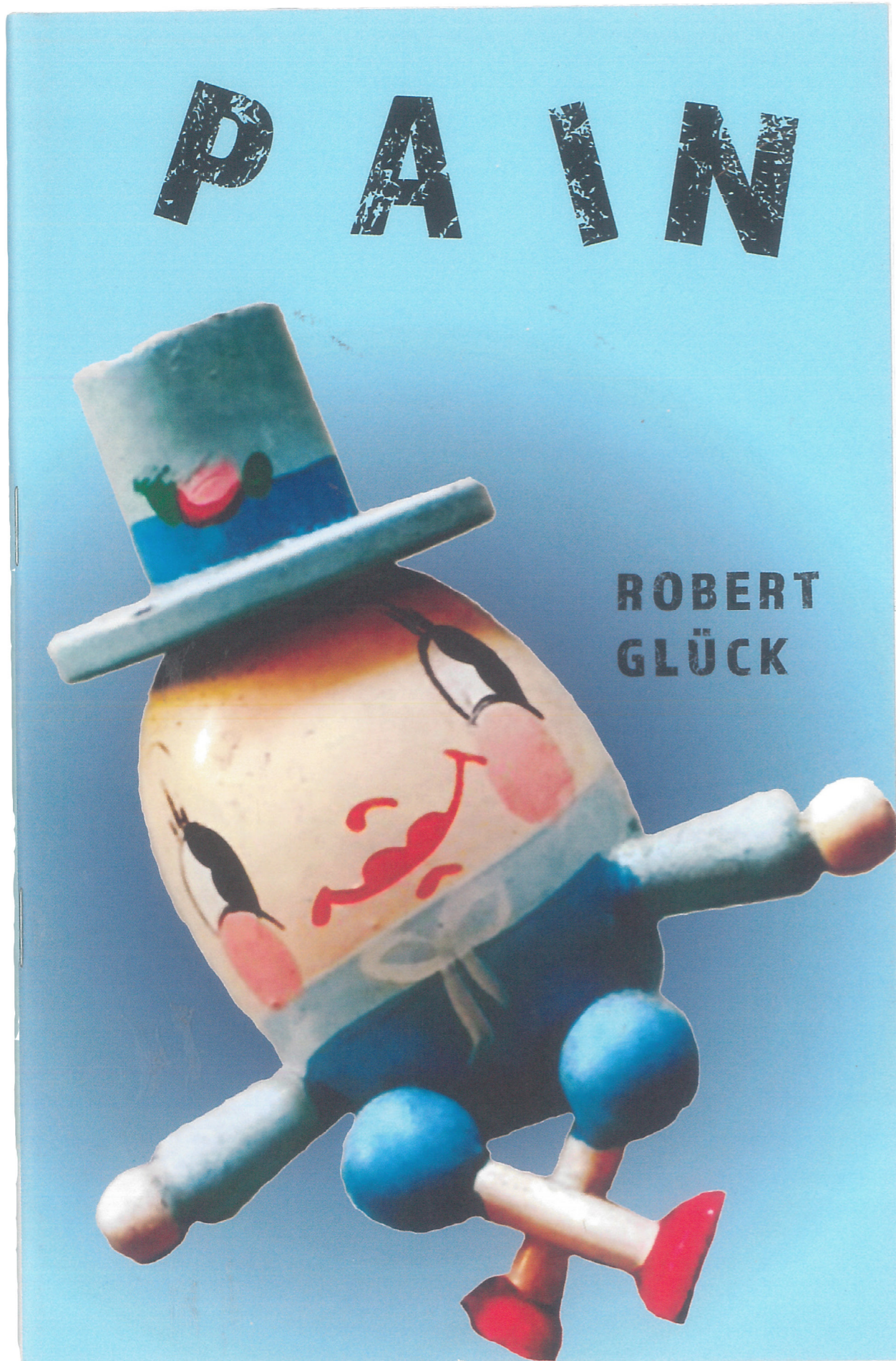


70. Excerpts from a ceramic notebook

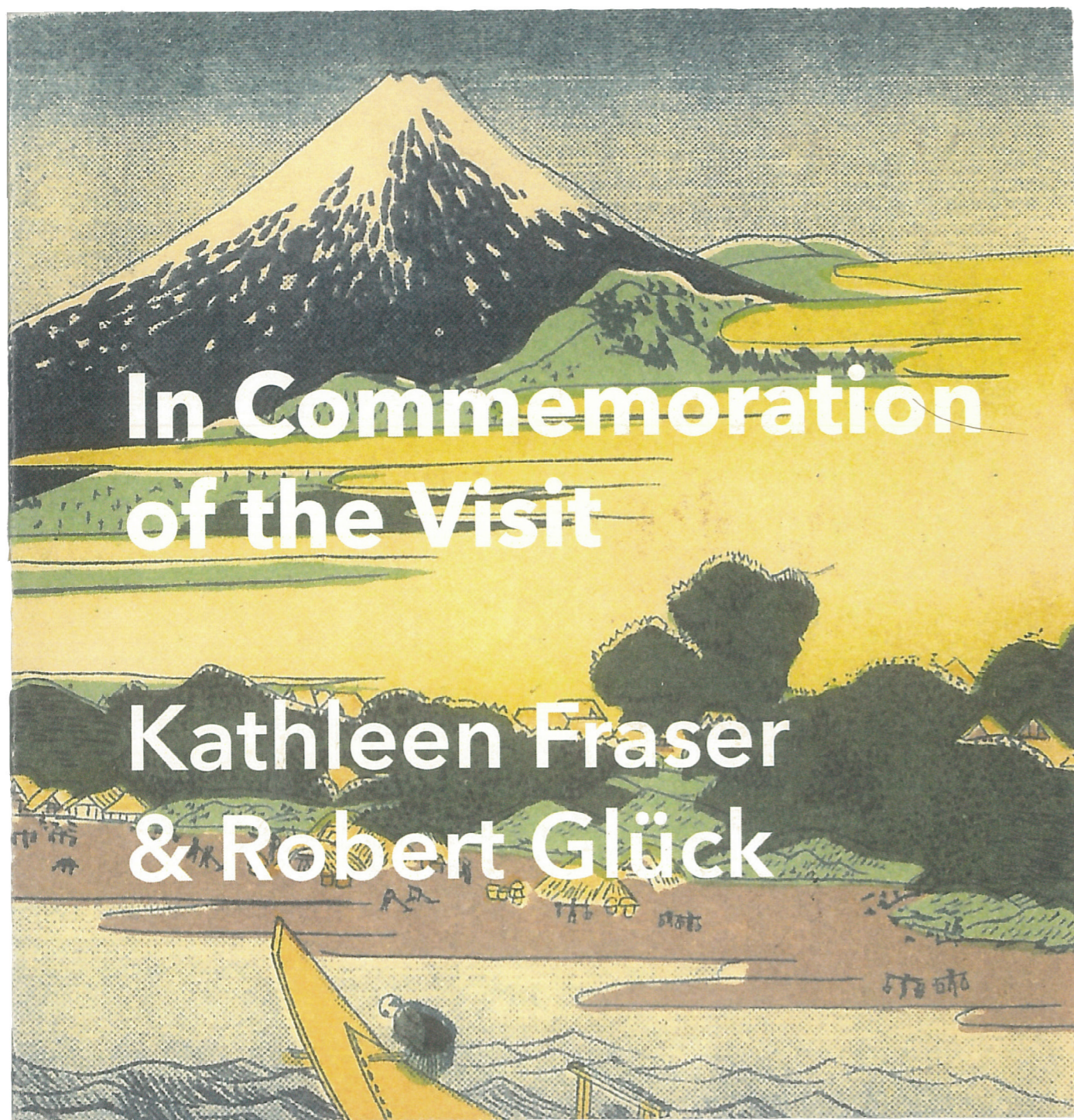


**71. Robert Glück - Pain / Camille Roy - Reading My Catastrophe**

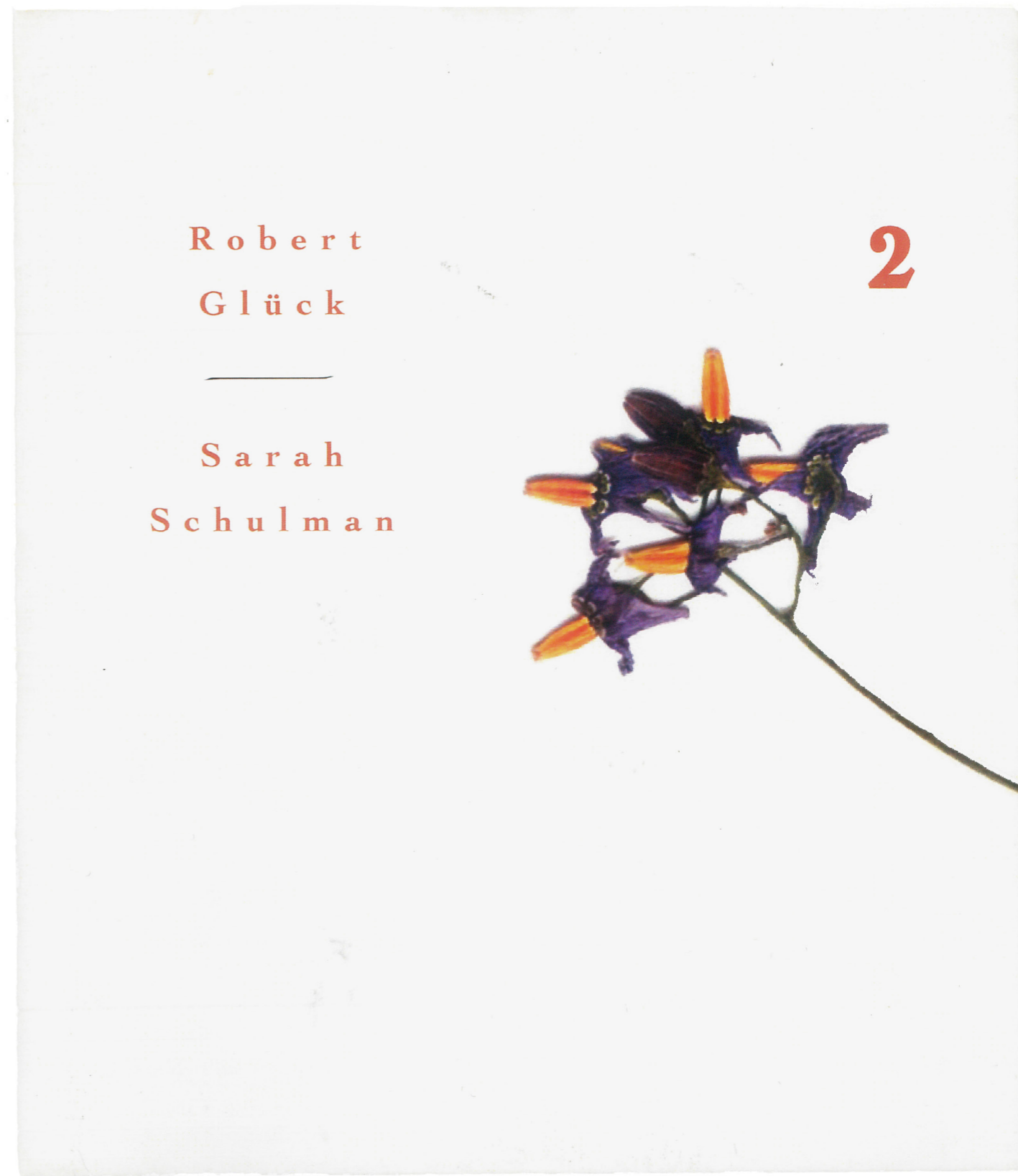
Two faced book - Asterion Projects - 2019



72. Robert Glück & Kathleen Fraser - *In Commemoration of the Visit*  
Further Other Book Works - 2015



73. Robert Glück, Sarah Schulman - *Elders Series #2*  
Belladonna - 2008



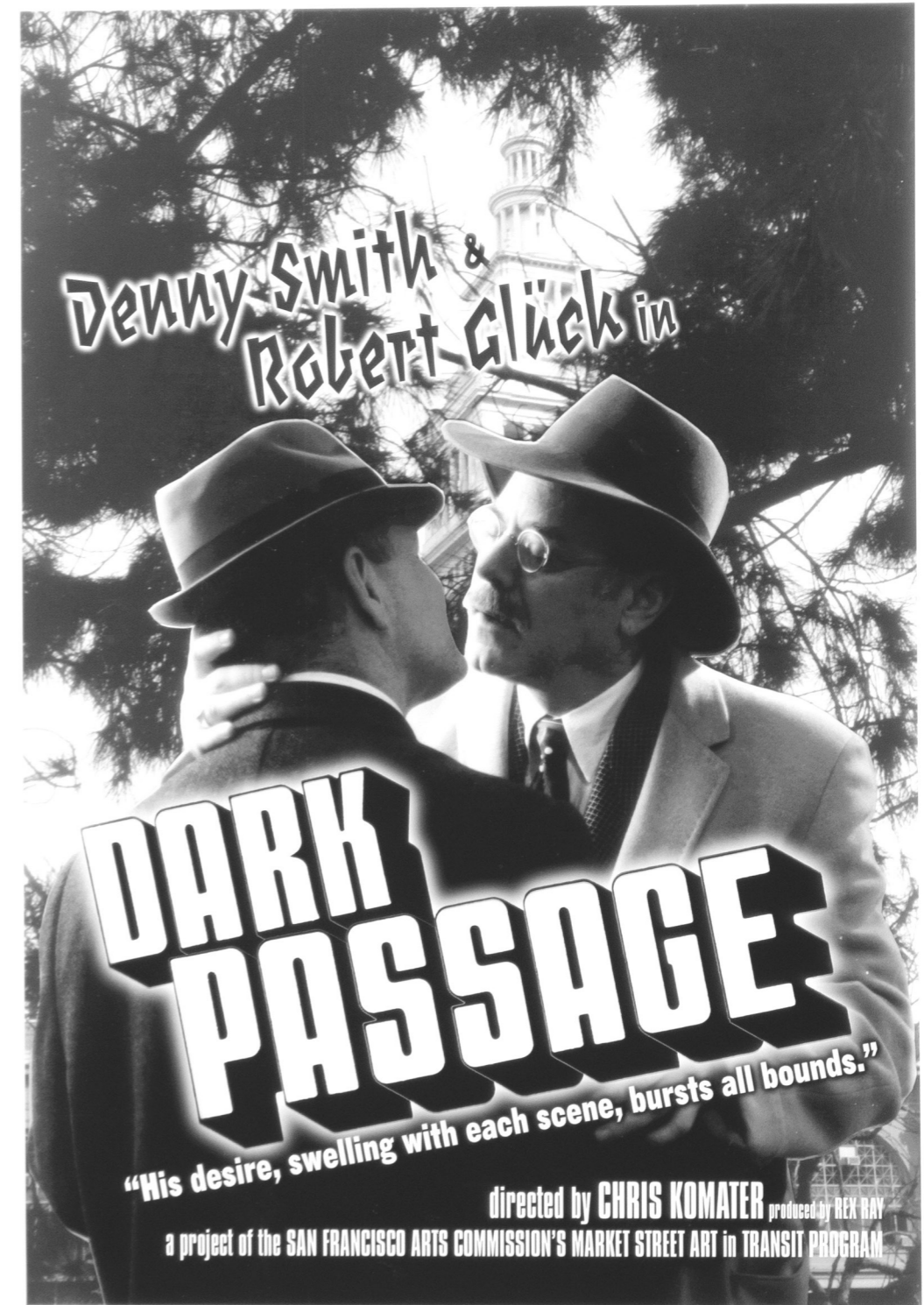
74. from a notebook - Poster

Sucking Alanzo's cock—so bitter it scalded a star on my tongue, but also somehow opened out into the whole sky.

from a notebook

75. Chris Komater - *Dark Passage*

Poster - 1998



R.G. In 1998, Chris Komater created *Dark Passage*, a poster series for 24 advertising kiosks on Market Street for the San Francisco Arts Commission. The great Rex Ray was the producer. I was famous for fifteen minutes.

**76 - 83. Vases and Jars**

All stoneware with underglaze and glaze - between 2019 and 2023



**76. Vase**

Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2020



**78. Jar**

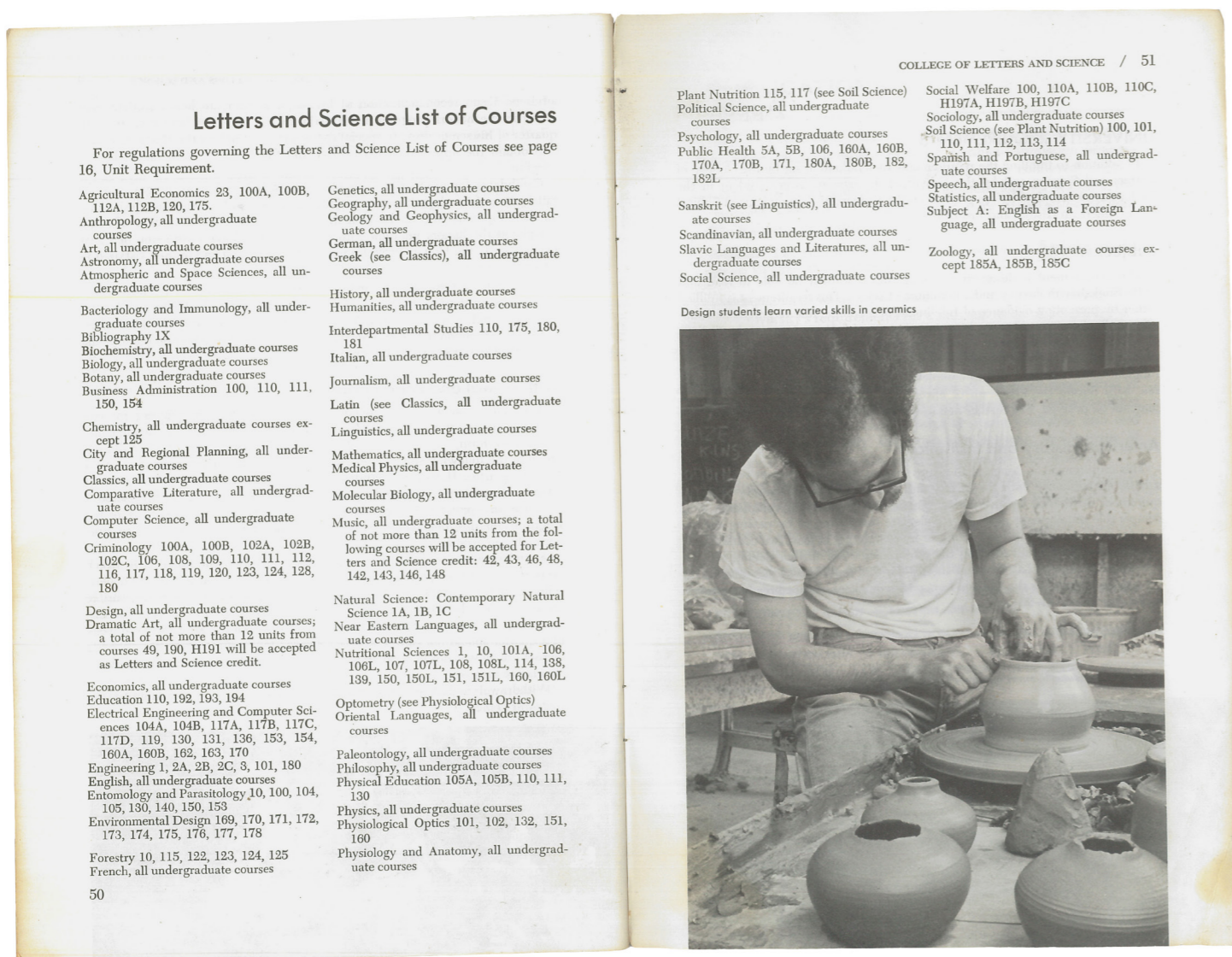
Stoneware with underglaze and glaze - 2023





## 84. Robert Glück in the ceramic workshop

Student handbook from Berkeley - 1968/69



## 85. "Four on Emptiness" - 1997

from *Communal Nude* - Semiotext(e) - 2016

### FOUR ON EMPTINESS

1) When I was a potter in the sixties and seventies, there was nostalgia in the field for the shaping of bowls and vessels—the ancient activity of enclosing a particular emptiness with a shape whose use and beauty are exactly the same, different only in the words that describe them. So throwing a pot on the wheel I could live in a myth and be emptiness inviting form into existence, as the Song dynasty pots seem to do; or I could battle for existence against the rigors of emptiness, as the Zen pots seem to do. If content empties, then story migrates to form. I even made closed spheres whose function was to contain nothing.

2) I wonder if that's why Keanu Reeves is so popular. There's something sixties about him. Does his cult suggest a kind of retro awareness of nothingness as an aesthetic pleasure? But not like pottery, not nostalgia for imminence, more like goofing on chaos theory—the emptiness of statistics. Like a bowl, I want to lift him for a moment to display the lack of stimulation, his exalted materiality and his inclination to flatten out of existence. The world is too bored to concentrate on a book. Keanu pauses while descending a staircase. He's information.

3) It seems to me there is a knot in experimental writing that consists in approaching the present (real time), which creates fragmentation, around which emptiness (silence, porousness) is displayed, which in turn makes words and the cogs and wheels of narration more opaque than they normally are. This tangle of operations is set off by the desire to make art that represents or

participates in the present, which is impossible to bring into words because it does not yet/can never exist in that form.

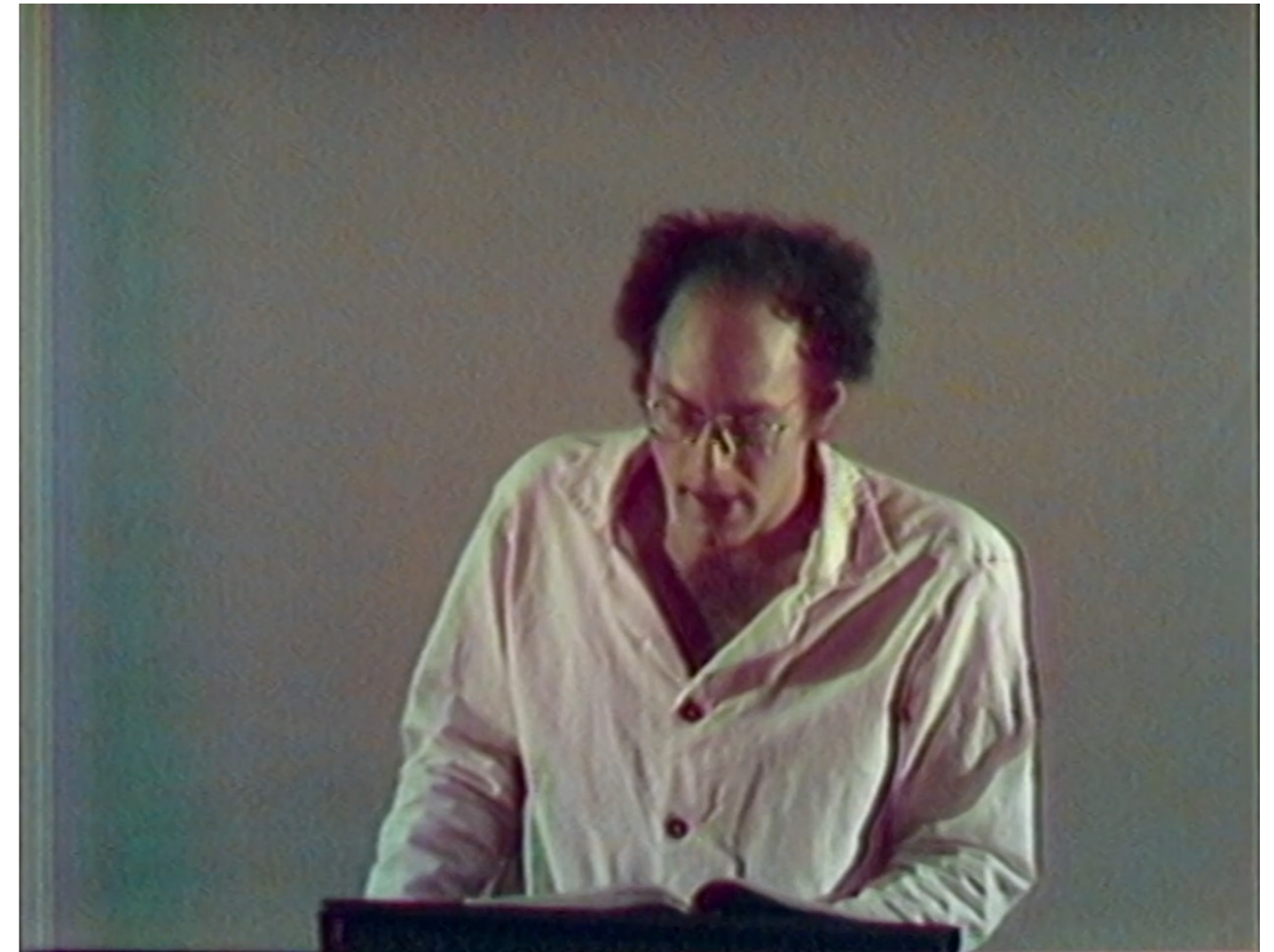
You can subtract meaning from language—but does meaninglessness also go? Is that the flip side? *In order for the sign to have an exterior, a boundary line, the referent must exist, if only as a phantom* (Agamben).

In my novel *Margery Kempe*, I wanted to compose certain sections of topic sentences, so that each sentence arises from the silence of beginnings, before speech, and delivers the possibility of a new world. Each sentence is a kind of promise, an increment of hope that replaces the broken promise of the last sentence. What is that promise? That the world will continue, that one image will replace the next forever—that is, the world will respond to your love by loving you back. The silence is that of a world about to be born.

4) But it could also be that of a grave, the last word. Ed, my dying friend, said, “My death is an emptiness that I can’t fill.”

## 86. Robert Glück reading

for The Poetry Center & American Poetry Archives at the San Francisco State University - 31”30 - April 1975



**87. Dean Smith & Robert Glück - *Aliengnosis***

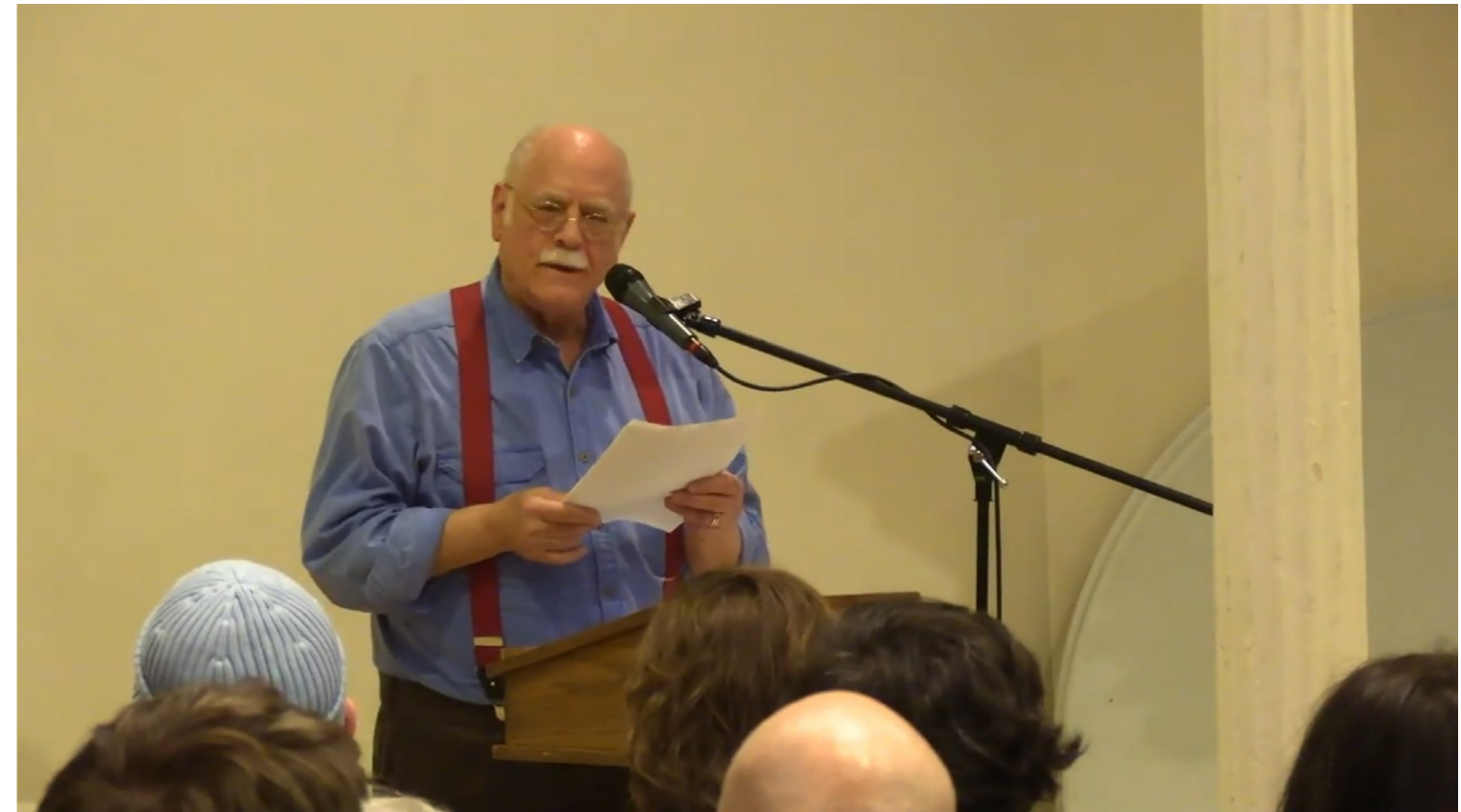
12"07 - 2008

I was sure it could not see me  
through the stars



**88. Robert Glück reading**

for Poetry Project, New York - 33"30 - March 2023



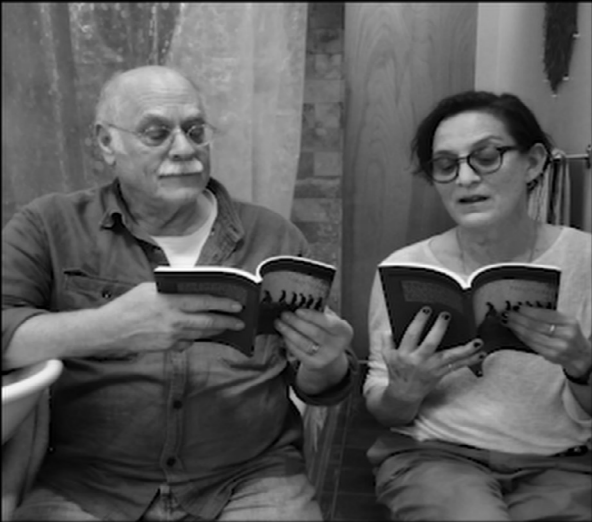
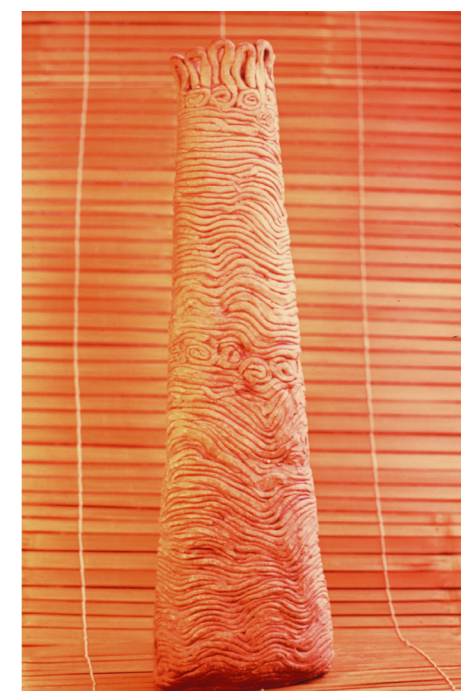
**89. Jocelyn Saidenberg & Robert Glück - In This Country**

8"23 - 2023



**90. Ceramics from the 70's**

Digitized slide show



*Text & Voices*  
*Robert Glück*  
*& Jocelyn Saidenberg*

*Sound*  
*Dean Smith*

*Editing*  
*M Kitchell*

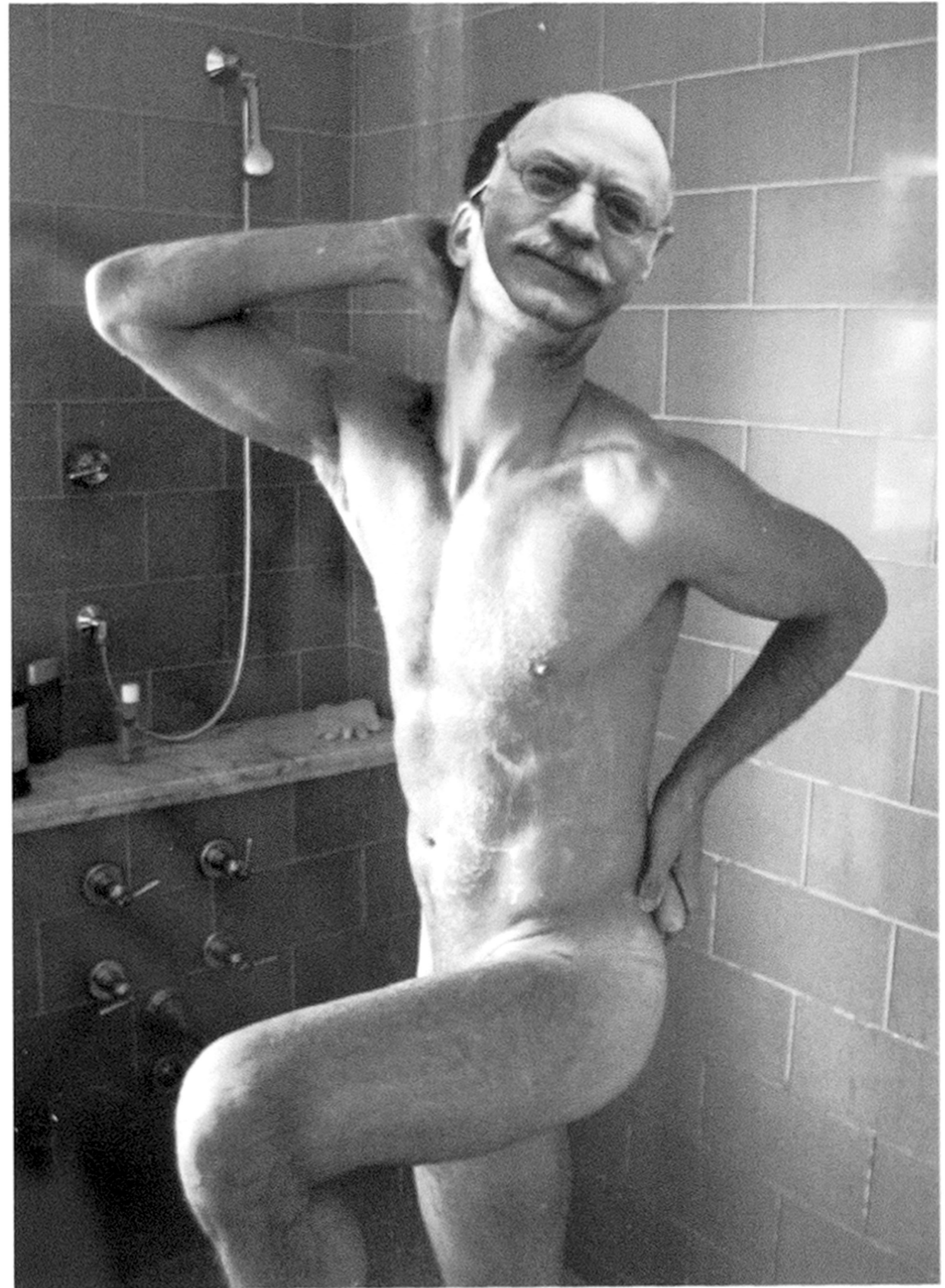
*Technical Assistance*  
*Chris Komater*

*Original Film*  
*Trois Gouttes de la Rosée*



## Biography

Robert Glück has exhibited his ceramics infrequently, most recently in a one-person show at Josey in Norwich, February to April, 2023. He is the author of two story collections, *Elements* and *Denny Smith*, and three novels, *Jack the Modernist*, *Margery Kempe*, and *About Ed*, which was published by NYRB in late 2023. His collected essays, *Communal Nude*, was published by Semiotex(e) in 2016. His books of poetry include *Reader*, *La Fontaine* with Bruce Boone, *In a Commemoration of the Visit* with Kathleen Fraser, and *I, Boombox*, published by Roof Books in 2023. In the late 70's, Glück and Bruce Boone founded New Narrative, a literary movement of self-reflexive storytelling that combines essay, lyric, and autobiography in one work. Glück served as director of The Poetry Center at San Francisco State University. He was codirector of Small Press Traffic Literary Center and associate editor at Lapis Press. He lives “high on a hill” in San Francisco.



vernissage le 6 janvier à 18h avec une lecture et une conversation à 19h30



Treize, 24 rue Moret 75011 Paris ouvert les jeudi, vendredi et samedi de 14h à 19h